

Friday Times

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Syrian refugees



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

With the arrival of winter, calls for assistance to Syrian refugees, whether financial or material, such as clothes or blankets, have been circulated. I also heard the same plea on the radio recently. But I started to wonder why are there still Syrian refugees living in tents and why are they still abroad? Why don't they return to their homeland and rebuild their houses? At least the money given to them by individuals or charities will be beneficial.

Syrian refugees are citizens who fled from Syria as the Syrian crisis escalated with the entry of terrorist militias. The number of Syrian refugees abroad is estimated at 7.5 million, while the number of internally-displaced persons in Syria is over six million. Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees, followed by Jordan and Lebanon.

The Syrian refugee crisis is one of the longest and most complex humanitarian emergencies ongoing since 2011, and the vast majority of refugees from Syria have found shelter in host communities in neighboring countries. Germany was one of the first Western countries that welcomed Syrians. We are not in the past and I believe I am not the only one who thinks why are there still Syrian refugees abroad. Isn't it time to go home?

Many major countries are trying to find a solution to this situation now. A new report said Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed the situation of Syria over the phone. During the call, both sides stressed the importance of resolving humanitarian problems, including the return of refugees.

Turkish President Recep Erdogan has also made many statements on the safety and security of refugees. In Jan 2019, a meeting of the Arab Development Summit in Beirut called for redoubling efforts to promote conditions conducive to the return of refugees to their country.

I believe that it is time to close this file with the return of those citizens to their country, and money should be given under specific guidance through the United Nations and international organizations to ensure that no donation or funds fall into the wrong hands. I think we have to be fair to all host nations because these countries that are hosting Syrian refugees have economic problems and they have priorities towards their citizens.

So keeping the issue of refugees unsolved will increase social tension and the host communities are also likely to put pressure on their governments. Some newspapers have reported that some refugees are afraid to return home because of security concerns.

I agree that providing security for returning refugees is important. When the fighting stops, the reconstruction process will not be easy or simple or happen overnight. But staying out of the country is not the answer, especially after the return of stability to the homeland. This issue needs closure.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Kuwait City as seen through Souq Sharq's marina. — Photo by Noura Edhbayah (KUNA)

Something's in the air



KAFFEEKLATSCH

By Shakir Reshamwala

Shakir@kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait has a significant problem of air pollution. While public attention has been focused on smog-hit northern India, which has the worst air quality in the world, it is worthwhile to note that Kuwait ranks seventh worst worldwide in the estimated average concentration of PM2.5, according to the Swiss-based IQAir AirVisual app.

PM2.5 refers to particulate matter (ambient airborne particles) which measure up to 2.5 microns in size, and has a range of chemical makeups and sources. PM2.5 is widely regarded as the pollutant with the most health impact of all commonly measured air pollutants. Due to its small size PM2.5 is able to penetrate deep into the human respiratory system and from there to the entire body, causing a wide range of short- and long-term health effects.

Kuwait's estimated average PM2.5 concentration in 2018 was 56.0 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) of air, which is categorized as 'unhealthy', with an increased likelihood of adverse effects and aggravation to the heart and lungs among the general public. In the region, only Bahrain has worse air quality than Kuwait (fifth globally with a PM2.5 concentration of 59.8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). UAE comes in ninth with an average of 49.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. All three countries exceed the WHO annual guidelines by more than five times.

The most popular provider of air quality data in Kuwait is the US Embassy, which displays near real-time readings

of air pollution on its website. Other sources include the Kuwait Environment Public Authority, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and Kuwait University. There is usually some divergence in the readings provided by these monitors, but reviewing data over a period of time reveals air quality is generally poor in the country.

According to IQAir AirVisual, the primary contributor to air pollution in the Middle East is natural, from wind-blown dust storms. However, human activity also significantly contributes to local air pollution, including industrial emissions from oil refineries, fossil fueled power plants, combustion-based transportation and high usage of private vehicles.

For the average person, solutions to reduce air pollution seem to be beyond their control. This may be true to some extent, but IQAir has some tips to reduce personal exposure to air pollution. These include reducing outdoor activities when pollution levels are high, protecting indoor spaces by closing windows during outdoor air pollution episodes, and where possible, implementing indoor air purification and/or personal outdoor respiratory protection.

It adds that personal choices also have a significant impact on reducing pollution emissions. Choosing clean modes of transport (cycling, walking, public transport), lowering household energy usage and personal waste output, and supporting local air quality initiatives can all positively impact the air quality in our communities and on our planet.

The government has taken various measures to curb air pollution, including actively pursuing a target of using renewable energy to generate at least 15 percent of power by 2030. But we individuals also have a responsibility to pitch in and ensure that our actions do not pollute the environment. This is the least we can do for future generations.

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AL-KANDARI DIWANIYA captures the essence of vintage Kuwait

By Faten Omar

The diwaniya in Kuwait represents a historical legacy nurtured by successive generations. The convergence of a large group of citizens under one roof is an opportunity to exchange ideas and topics in various

fields, especially those of interest to the people of Kuwait. The diwaniya - a place where men gather - plays an important role in strengthening social relations among citizens in Kuwait. The importance of the diwaniya made the government include diwanias in building plans, so that every Kuwaiti house has one.

The modern-day diwaniya has inherited all the customs and traditions of the diwanias of yore. If you want to gauge public opinion in Kuwait, visit one or two diwanias! Kuwait Times spoke with Mahmoud Al-Kandari to learn more about the history of Al-Kandari Diwaniya, which according to him, was the first diwaniya in Bneid Al-Gar.

"Al-Kandari Diwaniya was established in 1960 by Abdulrahman Al-Kandari. It was the first diwaniya in Bneid Al-Gar back then," Kandari said. He told Kuwait Times the diwaniya is a place where all segments of society meet to consult and exchange views, news and a variety of topics. "The diwaniya in Kuwait has played many roles in the educational, intellectual and social as well as media fields. It has become an integral part of Kuwaiti social life," he said.

In the past, the diwaniya was a place where families and sheikhs gathered. "The Al-Sayers, Al-Mahameeds, Al-Sabahs and many more families used to come to the diwaniya to talk about trade and what was happening in society back then," Kandari recalled. "Today, the diwaniya is open to all - VIPs and regular citizens - every day to socialize, but official gatherings are on Wednesdays for relatives, friends and family to discuss family issues and sports," he explained.



Local



KUWAIT: Photos taken from Al-Kandari Diwaniya, one of Kuwait's oldest and the first diwaniya in Bneid Al-Gar. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

A day in the life

Masseur's healing hands can relieve stress and body pains

By Ben Garcia

Philip Dagumboy's day begins at 10 am, when his alarm goes off. After an hour and a half, the masseur is showered, cleanly shaved and ready for work. It takes him 20 to 30 minutes to travel from his home in Salmiya to his workplace in Salwa, and usually arrives ahead of his noon duty. "Besides my regular massage duties, I have been tasked by my boss to supervise the entire operation during my shift," he told Kuwait Times.

Dagumboy's first task is to check the list of appointments during the day. "I usually check the booking folder if I have a 12 pm massage appointment. If I have one, I proceed to the room and call my client. We have a receptionist who receives calls from customers for appointments. The list will be given to me and I usually divide the appointments amongst the staff accordingly. Of course, regular customers want to be handled by their regular masseurs," he said. When customers start pouring in, taking even a small break is impossible. "Mostly we are busy from the time we



Masseur Philip Dagumboy

open until 10 pm, and sometimes operations are extended till 11 pm."

As an experienced masseur, Dagumboy regularly gets compliments in the form of monetary tips from customers and commission if the salon meets the sales target. Another compliment he regularly gets from

satisfied clients is being told that he is possessed with magic or healing hands. "I don't think it's about the healing hand. I think it's the experience which I accumulated throughout my years on the job. Nonetheless, I am glad I can heal pains when I touch them. That is the purpose of me being a massage therapist - to touch and heal them," he said.

Dagumboy came to Kuwait in June 2008 after few years working at a foot spa and nail salon in the Philippines. "My line of work was in nail, hair and foot spas for men. I took a short course in the Philippines and I landed a job immediately after training," he said. Dagumboy completed his full masseur training when he got this job at a five-star hotel and spa in Salwa. "While I had some training in the Philippines, I learned more techniques during those months of training by international experts. I owe them my expertise - I learnt the techniques through them, and I am humbled because they really gave us the right tools and skills freely. I am loyal to my job, and my employers are kind and generous," he said.

His mother was in Kuwait since the early

'90s, so Dagumboy asked her to sponsor a tourist visa for him to join her in Kuwait. She immediately applied, and a few weeks later, he arrived in Kuwait in June 2008. "My first job was at a small but classy men's salon in Salmiya. I thought they would be able to transfer my visit visa to a work permit, but they were not able to do that and I found myself exiting back and forth to Bahrain thrice," he said. "I worked for a year on visit visas there. It was a hard job, because I had to walk at least two and half kilometers daily just to get KD 130. Thank God, now I am earning not less than KD 500," he said.

Dagumboy has been serving his company for the past 10 years and is proud and glad he is part of the team. With this job, he was able to invest and start building his dream house. "It's about believing and enjoying the job you are tasked to do and get the monthly salary. Do the job properly and the reward will follow. My house is being built now, and until such a time the house is completed and furnished, I am willing to work and enjoy my remaining years in Kuwait," he concluded.

British HSBC Bank Middle East, 1st bank in Kuwait



A British HSBC Bank Middle East cheque.



KUWAIT: British HSBC Bank Middle East staff in 1946. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: In line with the economic and commercial development witnessed in Kuwait in the first portion of the 20th century, the country required the presence of international banking entities to facilitate operations for merchants and business personnel. In 1942, the British HSBC Bank Middle East - operating under the name Imperial Bank of Persia - opened its doors for clients in Kuwait after establishing itself in Iraq and Iran. Speaking on the history of the bank, historian and researcher Mohammad Jamal said that prior to the opening, the Amir of Kuwait, then Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, negotiated with the bank the terms of operation in the country, giving Kuwaiti citizens more benefits and

services. The bank first opened on February 28, 1942 in the merchants market. In 1946, the bank began to attend to merchants' needs in importing goods from the US, Europe, India and elsewhere. The permits to bring goods to the country were issued by the British consulate in Kuwait, revealed Jamal who noted that initially, the bank did not offer full deposit services; however, it provided safety-deposit boxes for those willing to stash their money at the bank. The bank continued to offer services to clients at the same location in the merchants market until November 1949 where it relocated to Safat Square in Kuwait City. By 1950, the bank changed its name to the HSBC Bank Middle East, Jamal said. — KUNA



The bank's Safat Square branch, which opened in 1949.

Kuwait Times

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Local

Kuwait renews rejection of attempts to legitimize Israeli settlements

Kuwait donated \$118 million to UNRWA in five years

NEW YORK: Kuwait renewed its rejection of any endeavors aiming to legitimize the illegal Israeli settlements on all Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 including East Jerusalem. This came in Kuwait's speech delivered by Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi on the Middle East region on Wednesday. These efforts constitute a flagrant violation of the international law and the UN Security Council resolutions, mainly the resolution 2334, he said, adding that there are also an obstacle to peace. He renewed that the Israeli settlements are null, void and illegal, adding that they would not be an acceptable real matter. He extolled the efforts by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, reiterating his full support for the coordinator's endeavors to calm the situation in order to avoid confrontation, in light of the provocations and recent attacks carried out by the Israeli forces on the besieged Gaza Strip.

The Kuwaiti envoy condemned in the strongest terms the attacks on Gaza that led to the killing and the injuring of dozens of the un-

armed Palestinian people. He lauded the efforts exerted by Egypt aiming to help reach a ceasefire, and stop the Israeli attacks on civilians, residential areas and infrastructure. Last Friday, some 170 UN members voted in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly in favor of



Refugees core of Palestinian cause

the decision to extend the mandate of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for further three years, he went to say.

Otaibi pointed to basic services provided by the agency to about 5.5 million Palestinian

refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian land. He expressed his pride, as Kuwait is one of the key partners of UNRWA, stating that the country's donations hit \$118 million over the past five years. He affirmed that the issue of Palestinian refugees is the core of the Palestinian cause, pointing to responsibility of the Security Council to uphold the inherent and inalienable right of the generations of Palestinian refugees and their return to their homes from which they were displaced, in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy, mainly the General Assembly resolution 194.

He emphasized holding Israel the legal, political and moral responsibility as an occupying authority for the continuation of the Palestinian refugee problem. He also stressed the rejection of any move by any party to drop the right of return or distort the issue of Palestinian refugees through attempts to resettle or liquidate UNRWA. In addition, Otaibi pointed to the Israeli attacks on the holy Islamic and Christian sites, the attempts aiming to change the demographic status of Jerusalem, the expansion of settlements and



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi delivers a speech at the UN Security Council on Wednesday. — KUNA

the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians that constitute a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law. — KUNA

Kuwait showcases investment opportunities for Belgian companies

BRUSSELS: Several Kuwaiti participants have praised the outcome of two major Belgian-Kuwaiti economic events held in Brussels this week but stressed that there needs to be a follow-up to reap the real benefits. Faris Al-Obaid, advisor at the office of the Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said such meetings "between our friendly countries are always beneficial to expedite trade and increase the inflow of foreign direct investment and increase in flow of technology." Both the events were very beneficial for both sides, he indicated. The first-ever meeting of the joint Belgian-Kuwait economic committee was held at the Egmont Palace in Brussels on Tuesday, hosted by the Belgian foreign ministry. On Wednesday, the 'Business Forum on Kuwait Vision 2035' was organized by a Brussels-based trade body with the participation of Belgian companies and investors.

Obaid noted that he presented at both events His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision for a 'New Kuwait' by 2035 and about the future mega projects in Kuwait. "Such meetings are excellent as a starting point. What needs to be done now is a strong follow up after the two events in addition to more practical small steps in terms of cooperation whether in the research fields bringing lecturers from Belgium to Kuwait and exposing the know-how that is available in Belgium and Luxembourg for Kuwaiti entities to



BRUSSELS: Representatives from major Kuwaiti government institutions pose for a group photo on the sidelines of the 'Business Forum on Kuwait Vision 2035' held in Brussels, Belgium on Wednesday. — KUNA

understand the areas that we can focus on," he explained.

Fadhel Al-Faraj, Managing Director, Q8 Northwest Europe at Kuwait Petroleum International, said it has been a "wonderful and fruitful" couple of days. The delegation from Kuwait was "very well prepared and very committed to improving economic relations between Belgium and Kuwait," he said. "We as Kuwait Petroleum International in Belgium are a very successful company. We have the second best market share and we are the leading edge in the petroleum market in Belgium," said Faraj. "We hope that the success that we are having in Belgium can be reciprocated by Belgian companies in having success in Kuwait," he said. "The key is the follow up, and the follow up has to be very focused. Sometimes you need to hold the companies by

the hand to guide them through the process. We need to follow this up," he stressed.

Reem Ali Al-Shaya, head of international Agreements Section at the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), welcomed the investments by Belgian investors in Kuwait. She said that the meetings were "very fruitful" during which important issues were discussed including a proposal for the signing of an MoU on the opportunity for direct investment between Belgium and Kuwait. Maali Al-Otaibi from the Kuwait Port Authority said the events were a chance to offer the Belgian companies to invest in the port development projects in Kuwait which is part of the new Kuwait vision 2035. "Such meetings are important so that we can project our opportunities that we have in Kuwait for collaboration with the Belgian companies,"

she said. She noted that the port of Antwerp in Belgium is in collaboration with the port in Kuwait in particular in the training sector.

Qaisar Hijazin, Secretary General of the Arab Belgium-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce, said he organized the forum in cooperation with the Kuwait embassy to showcase Kuwait New Vision 2035 in Belgium. He noted that trade exchanges between Belgium and Kuwait are going up which means Kuwait is an attractive country for investment and there is a lot of opportunities in different fields. They have decided to invite a business delegation from the private sector in Kuwait to visit Belgium and Luxembourg next year. "After that we can invite a delegation from these two European countries to visit Kuwait to see for themselves the business opportunities available there," he added. — KUNA

Local

Consultations to form new Cabinet could take two weeks

Many candidates expected to reject invite into 'short-term Cabinet'

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Consultations made by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to form his new Cabinet are not expected to be finished before two weeks, said governmental sources, noting that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled has a long list of parliamentarians, academics and politicians he can invite to join the cabinet. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled has at least three nominees per portfolio, the sources added, noting that the likelihood that the first and second candidates might reject the position and having to opt for the third "is a process that would take over two weeks" to be finalized.

Further, the sources pointed out that the nominees' list was set that long in anticipation of the expected rejections because the new government would have a very short tenure, probably less than a year, before parliamentary elections take place by November 2020. "Some opposition parliamentarians were invited to join

the Cabinet, but they have so far been ejecting the idea," the sources highlighted, noting that it is most likely that the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) would be represented in the Cabinet through appointing Mohammed Al-Dallal as justice minister and minister of state for national assembly affairs.

The sources predicted that the Islamic Salafi Alliance (ISA) would be represented by a technocrat minister for public works, housing or services. "As for sheikhs to be appointed as ministers, the matter is up to the decision of the ruling family council," they explained, noting that sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah tops the list of candidates for the defense minister's position so far. Meanwhile, several parliamentary committees suspended their work because many of the issues on their agendas require the presence of ministers to explain the government's points of view in the proposed bills, which is undoable with the current caretaker Cabinet that has limited liabilities and authorities.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah bids farewell to his former colleagues at the Foreign Ministry during a visit to the ministry's building yesterday.

Fingerprint access to confirm staff return from leaves

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower decided using the biometric access system to mark employees' return from leaves, without having to do any other paper work. In this regard, the authority's director Ahmad Al-Moussa issued the administrative directive number 25/2019 announcing the new measure in a bid to facilitate the human resources' work process and accelerate personnel affairs' transactions.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health (MOH) is studying the possibility of imposing a KD 1 fee to attest sick leaves issued by private sector medical facilities for government employees. Al-Jarida daily reported yesterday quoting informed sources who noted that this step is taken to stop sick leave manipulation or forgery, especially in view of the "huge numbers of sick leaves issued by private sector medical facilities over the past two years."

"Some of these leaves were fake and made without any medical examination," the sources added, noting that such leaves were usually 'bought' and thus, it was decided to endorse them through the general medical council and the medical licenses department.

Moreover, the sources stressed that MOH is currently working on allocating special accounts for private sector medical facilities on the ministry's system on the integrated systems' website so that they could directly register all sick leaves on issuance to facilitate and accelerate checking and endorsing them. Notably, the medical council imposed a KD 2 fee by the end of September to endorse private sector sick leaves but minister Sheikh Basil Al-Sabah suspended it for review.

Friday Prayer's speech

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs distributed today's Friday Prayer speech various mosques under the title of "Let's Keep Kuwait Safe together." The speech focuses on the need to ignore exchanged abuse and accusations on social media as those practices are totally rejected in Islam, which always calls for good and integral conduct and prohibits bad conduct. The speech also

calls for unity and avoiding rallies and all forms of chaos that might be negatively utilized by those plotting to harm Kuwait.

Students abroad

The Ministry of Higher Education has recently prepared a draft law on banning Kuwaiti students abroad from getting degrees through affiliation or associate studies and mandating enrollment to full time studies under the supervision of the ministry, Kuwait's cultural offices or Kuwaiti embassies abroad, said informed sources. The sources added that once finished, the bill would be referred to the fatwa and legislation department to be legally paraphrased prior to submittal to the parliament for approval. Notably, the ministry of higher education believes in the need to follow the full time studies and ban affiliation, which opens for manipulation and twisted ways to unlawfully obtain degrees and eventually have unqualified graduates.

Jahra seafront

The primary cost of the Jahra seafront development project would be KD 300-400 million, the project's manager at Kuwait Municipality Nawaf Al-Muttairi said. He added that the project would be the largest ever in seafront projects in Kuwait and that the consultancy contract had been already signed in preparation for implementation. Meanwhile, the municipal council's technical committee approved a proposal made by member Abdul Aziz Al-Me'jel pertaining with allowing offices to be opened in the mezzanines and first floors of industrial area buildings.

Money laundering

Kuwait has recently witnessed a number of positive developments in fighting money laundering, funding terrorism, meeting international requirements and commitment to international standards in fighting money laundering and terrorism funding, said Ghazi Al-Abdul Jaleel, the acting head of Kuwait Financial Investigations Unit and EGMONT Group's MENA regional representative. Speaking on the sidelines of participating in the national summit for fighting terrorism funding and the related sanctions which was organized by UAE's central bank in Abu Dhabi in the period of November 17-18, Abdul Jaleel pointed to the significance of assessing regional threats, the weaknesses they pose and attempt to fight them through effective local and international co-operation. Abdul Jaleel added that money laundering and terrorism funding are extremely dangerous crimes that have absolute negative impacts on national and international economies, safety and security. "Kuwait is working hard on maintaining its financial sector integrity and safety," he concluded.

Power cut from 10 'bachelors' homes

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality workers cut power from 10 homes housing bachelors in Khaitan as part of a campaign to evict single male residents living in families' neighborhoods around Kuwait. An integrated plan was prepared to find the largest number of bachelors' residences and take legal action against them according to law 125/1992, said Waleed Al-Daghar, Director of the violations' department at Kuwait Municipality's Farwaniya branch.

In other news, the Municipal Council is set to debate during its meeting scheduled on Monday a request to discuss the situation of public cleanliness in the country. The discussion is expected to focus on a report detailing the level of public cleanliness in Kuwait, as well as copies of contracts signed with cleaning companies which the council is expected to receive from Kuwait Municipality.

Firemen suspended for fighting

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Three firemen were suspended and sent for questioning after they had a fight at a fire station, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement yesterday. It added that KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mikrad gave orders to suspend the trio and send them to the proper authorities for questioning following their brawl. Meanwhile, police are looking for others who were involved in the fight but are not KFSD employees, the department added.

Friday Times International

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Pope meets Buddhist patriarch on a visit to promote harmony

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More US children die in mass shootings at home than at school

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BIRMINGHAM: Britain's Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn stands with members of his Shadow Cabinet as they pose in front of the party's campaign 'battle' bus, at the launch of the Labor party election manifesto in Birmingham, northwest England. — AFP

UK's Labor unveils socialist plan

'Radical and ambitious': Labor publishes manifesto

BIRMINGHAM: Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn unveiled his opposition party's election manifesto yesterday, setting out his "radical" plans to transform Britain with public sector pay rises, higher taxes on companies and a sweeping nationalization of infrastructure. Voters faces a stark choice at the Dec. 12 election: Corbyn's plan for a socialist Britain, including widespread nationalization and free public services, or Prime Minister Boris Johnson's drive to deliver Brexit within months and build a "dynamic market economy".

Speaking in the central English city of Birmingham, Corbyn launched his "green industrial revolution" plans saying only Labor could challenge the status quo, fighting for ordinary people against "bankers, billionaires and the establishment". "Labor's manifesto is a manifesto for hope, that is what this document is - a manifesto that will bring real change," Corbyn said. "A manifesto full of popular policies that the political establishment has blocked for a generation."

Lagging in the polls, Corbyn hopes his message of change will drown out criticism of his Brexit stance, which even some in his party say lacks the clarity of Johnson's vow to "get Brexit done". He will also hope to avoid comparisons with Labor's most infamous attempt to sell Britons a socialist future - a 1983 manifesto described later by a then Labor lawmaker as "the longest suicide note in history", which led to heavy defeat.

Both parties have promised to end economic austerity and spend more money on public services ahead of the election, which will determine how, when and even whether Britain's departure from the European Union happens. Trying to combat criticism from Johnson's Conservative Party over Labor's spending plans, Corbyn sought to say how Labor planned to pay for its platform, which also includes scrapping university fees and reducing the working week. The manifesto showed an extra 82.9 billion pounds of spending, matched by 82.9 billion pounds of revenue-raising measures.

Tired voters

Most polls put the Conservative Party in front, but few are able or willing to predict a victor in the election. Labor could be in a position to form a minority government if Johnson's Conservatives fall short of an outright majority in parliament and rivals are prepared to support Corbyn as prime minister. But to implement its manifesto in full the party would likely need an even bigger turnaround in the election race to claim a majority of its own.

One polling expert described the chances of this as "close to zero" based on current evidence. Held after three years of negotiations to leave the EU, the December election for the first time will show how far Brexit has torn traditional political allegiances apart and will test an electorate increasingly tired of voting. Labor has put at the forefront of its campaign its attack on "vested interests", taking aim at Johnson, who was educated at England's elite Eton public school, has considerable personal wealth and whose party has wealthy backers.

Amongst the proposals, Labor said it would bring in a windfall tax on oil companies, de-list companies that do not contribute to tackling climate change and increase public sector pay by 5%. "They know we will go after the tax dodgers, the bad bosses and the big polluters so that everybody in our country gets a fair chance in life," Corbyn said.

His manifesto promised to reverse privatizations begun by former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, by nationalizing rail, mail, water, and BT's broadband network to provide free internet for all. Those pledges have been mocked by the Conservatives, with Johnson calling plans to nationalize broadband as a "crazed Communist scheme". Corbyn is defiant. "If the bankers, billionaires and the establishment thought we represented politics as usual, that we could be bought off, that nothing was really going to change - they wouldn't attack us so ferociously," he said. "But they know we mean what we say." — Reuters

International

Pro-Haftar forces in Libya 'shoot down Italian drone'

UN envoy slams foreign interference, air strikes in Libya

BENHAZI: Forces loyal to Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar said they shot down an Italian drone in western Libya, flying in a zone under their control. "We shot down the Italian drone with an anti-aircraft missile, north of Tarhouna," the rear base of Haftar's forces, southeast of Tripoli, said Haftar's spokesman Ahmad Al-Mesmari. "We are still waiting for an explanation about the reasons why the drone flew over Libyan territory," Mesmari added.

Italy's ministry of defense said earlier that the drone "crashed on Libyan territory while carrying out a mission" to ensure the safety of oil platforms and fishermen off Libya. "An investigation is under way to determine the causes of the incident," Rome said in a brief statement, adding that "the flight plan was previously communicated to the Libyan authorities". The pro-Haftar forces initially announced that they had shot down a Turkish drone. It comes days after the UN's Libya envoy pleaded with foreign actors to honor an arms embargo

Ghassan Salame said "external parties" were

operating drone strikes that are increasing civilian casualties, adding that the growing use of experienced mercenaries was intensifying the conflict. Libya has been mired in chaos since a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The UN-recognized Government of National Accord is contested by a parallel administration in the east, backed by Haftar.

Haftar launched an offensive on April 4 with his self-proclaimed Libyan National Army to take the capital, but the conflict's frontlines have moved little. Faced with a standoff, the two sides have turned to sophisticated weaponry in the hope of gaining an advantage in a battle that has killed over 1,000, injured close to 6,000 and forced 120,000 people from their homes, according to UN figures. Haftar is backed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE, while Turkey and Qatar back his rival.

Foreign interference

Meanwhile, UN's Libya envoy pleaded with

foreign actors to honor an arms embargo on the conflict-torn country as he said an attack on a Tripoli factory Monday may amount to a war crime. Ghassan Salame accused unnamed countries of worsening the violence in Libya in a strongly worded address via video link to the United Nations Security Council in New York. He said "external parties" were operating drone strikes that are increasing civilian casualties, adding that the growing use of experienced mercenaries was intensifying the conflict.

"The dangers and direct consequences of foreign interference are increasingly evident," said Salame, warning of a "race against time" to secure a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Salame called for external actors to adhere to a UN arms embargo imposed on Libya since 2011. He did not mention any names but a confidential report seen by AFP earlier this month found that Jordan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates have regularly violated the embargo.

The year-long study found that the three countries "routinely and sometimes blatantly

supplied weapons with little effort to disguise the source." According to diplomats, Jordan was accused of having trained troops of Khalifa Haftar, a military strongman in eastern Libya who launched an offensive in April in a bid to seize Tripoli from fighters loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA). The United Arab Emirates — another Haftar backer — is suspected of using attack aircraft on behalf of his Libyan National Army (LNA) forces.

The UAE is suspected of involvement in a July 2 bombing of a detention center for migrants in a Tripoli suburb which left around 50 people dead. Salame said in his briefing that LNA forces were increasingly using unguided bombs in airstrikes on populated areas of Tripoli. "It is our judgment that the drone infrastructure and operations are facilitated by external parties to the conflict," he added, without naming names. Salame said an attack on a biscuit factory in southern Tripoli Monday had killed 10 people and "may constitute a war crime." —Agencies

Police choppers a terrifying sight in Rio slums

RIO DE JANEIRO: For those who live in Rio de Janeiro's crime-racked slums, danger and fear are not just around every corner—they also come from the sky. Police snipers in helicopters—who fire off shots from above, sometimes in close proximity to day care centers and schools—can make the favelas feel like a war zone. "When they fly at low altitude, it feels like they are going to land right on our homes. The sound is deafening and the windows rattle," says 30-year-old Thais Custodio, who lives in a sprawling network of 16 favelas known as the Mare. Located near the international airport serving Brazil's tourism capital, Mare is home to more than 140,000 people. In the labyrinth of alleys, amid a tangle of electrical wires hanging every which way, youths armed with assault-style rifles are a common sight.

Mare is a high-risk zone—there is even a thoroughfare, known as the "Gaza Strip," which separates territory controlled by two rival drug gangs. Unlike some Rio favelas perched on steep hills, the ramshackle homes in Mare were built on a flat surface—making it an easy target for police helicopter raids. In 2009, one such chopper was shot down by drug traffickers shooting from a hill in the north of the city. Three people were killed in the incident, and it left a mark on the community. A decade later, security forces are carrying out more and more air raids.

According to the local non-governmental organization Redes da Mare (Mare Networks), helicopters were used in eight of 21 police operations in the complex in the first half of the year. Fifteen people died in the raids overall, 14 of them in the operations involving helicopters. In comparison, choppers were used in only three operations there in all of 2018. For Camila Barros, who leads research efforts and collects data on security for the NGO, it is impossible to know if the shots fired from the helicopters were the fatal ones. Barros says the aircraft are most often used to pinpoint the location of suspected drug traffickers, and the shots are meant to hem them in. "They fly very low, in circles, to corner suspects and drive them towards agents on the ground who are tasked with killing them," Barros claimed. "In June, we went to the scene of an operation a few hours after the fact, and we counted more than 100 bullet impacts."

Silvia Ramos, a specialist at the Center for Research on Security and Citizenship (CESec), said the increased use of helicopters in police raids is directly linked to the arrival in January of a new governor for Rio de



RIO DE JANEIRO: In this file photo a PM paramilitary police helicopter overflies the Favela da Mare shantytown complex in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. —AFP

Janeiro state, Wilson Witzel. Witzel, a tough-on-crime politician in the vein of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, made headlines in May when he appeared in a video aboard a helicopter as officers fired shots into a favela. "Before, the use of helicopters was an exception, but it is becoming the rule under this government," Ramos said. "We're seeing more and more deadly police operations that are wreaking havoc" in the favelas, she said, underscoring the damaging psychological effect of the raids on residents.

How can Rio police justify the use of force that seems more appropriate for a war zone? For some lawmakers, the favelas are just that. "We are in a civil war," right-wing lawmaker Capitao Augusto, one of the leaders of the pro-weapons lobby in Brazil's legislature said. "If a person is armed with an assault rifle, that person is a threat and should be neutralized—it doesn't matter if the person is shot by a sniper, a drone or from a helicopter." —AFP

Ultra-Orthodox Jews fight domestic violence in Israel

KFAR SABA: "If you are scared, that is not shlom bayit," reads the slogan that Esty Shushan hopes will encourage religious Jewish Israeli women like her to leave violent marriages. The phrase, which literally translates as "peaceful home", is vitally important in Judaism — meaning an obligation to protect the unity of the family.

Shushan, 42, is making sure to frame her organization's campaign in the language of her ultra-Orthodox community, which makes up around 10 percent of Israel's population. Seven years ago, driven by high levels of gender inequality in her community, Shushan co-founded an association to improve ultra-Orthodox women's visibility and political representation. Called Nivcharot, meaning "The Chosen", it now has around 15,000 supporters. Ultra-Orthodox Jews live in close-knit communities often closed off to the wider world, with patriarchal family structures common.

Shushan and her colleagues hope that ultra-Orthodox women will be more comfortable opening up to others from their own community. In a room in an educational centre in the city of Kfar Saba north of Tel Aviv in central Israel, they meet to finalize their new campaign. Hair hidden under hats or wigs, they wear long clothes that cover their elbows and knees, preserving their modesty in the traditional way for ultra-Orthodox Jews. Over pizza and soft drinks, they strategize how best to encourage victims to speak out.

Rabbi first

Violence against women occurs throughout Israeli society, said Mally Shechory Bitton, a couples therapist and professor at Ariel University in the Israeli settlement of Ariel in the occupied West Bank. But in ultra-Orthodox communities there is also a taboo on discussing it, she said, with a feeling that you "shouldn't wash your dirty linen in public". "Orthodox women turn to the rabbi before turning to the police, which also makes the phenomenon of domestic violence difficult to quantify," she said. —AFP

International

The unfinished business in the birthplace of Sudan revolution

Interim government 'must solve economic problems'

ATBARA: Standing on the platform where he and other protesters packed a train to Khartoum in April to pressure Sudan's military to share power with civilians, Abdelaziz Abdallah made clear the revolution driven by their city has much further to go. A veteran railway worker-turned union leader, Abdallah was among the first to take to the streets in this labor stronghold in December, sparking a national uprising that toppled long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir almost four months later. It took another four months for the military, which had ousted Bashir, to formally agree to a three-year power sharing deal with a civilian-led transitional government.

People in Atbara, a colonial-era railway hub, support the national government in the capital some 350 km (220 miles) to the south, but say some of the main grievances which drove their uprising - poor salaries and unemployment - remain. "Railway workers have among the lowest state salaries" earning as little as 1,200 Sudanese pounds (\$26.67) a month while needing at least 10,000 pounds to get by, said Abdallah, who took over the union after Bashir's ouster.

They also want funds to revive the railway- once Africa's longest network but now largely derelict. They are tough demands for Prime Min-

ister Abdalla Hamdok, who is trying to avert the collapse of an economy wrecked by three decades of mismanagement and US sanctions. Whether he can meet the expectations of thousands of railway workers will be a test for the whole country, as Atbara has been a hotbed of unrest since independence from Britain in 1956.

Resistance committees

The protesters have formed resistance committees, which helped maintain the uprising and now want a say in their city. Able to meet freely since bans on gatherings were lifted with Bashir's fall, they discuss issues such as how to create jobs for the youth by trying to find farmland to grow crops. But they also fume that the city is still run by a military governor. Bashir's security network has lost some power but its officers remain in Atbara as elsewhere and soldiers, while no longer patrolling the streets, are stationed in nearby barracks.

"Nothing has changed for citizens and the youth. The civil service is still made up of the former regime," said Adel Sheikh, a senior member of Atbara's Forces for Freedom and Change coalition, the main umbrella group that negotiated the national power sharing deal with the generals.

Finding jobs is on many people's minds. "I hope to get a job as engineer," said Mohamed Abdelathim, jobless since 2007. "State jobs under the (old regime) were for regime people," he said.

Coups

Atbara, at the junction of the Nile and Atbara rivers, has been a barometer for Sudan since British colonialists established a railway hub here, building dozens of villas to house railway managers which now lie empty. Maps entitled "Sudan railways" still hang on walls in administrative buildings where receipts printed in English and Sudanese lie on abandoned desks. Workers here pushed for independence, formed the backbone of a powerful post-independence Communist Party and have risen up against various military rulers ever since, paying the price for their activism with mass dismissals.

Sudan has had only three brief three civilian governments, all toppled by generals who took over after saying that civilians had failed to fix an economy in crisis. Hamdok is in a similar situation, heading a government shared with military. He wants to increase public salaries and compensate some 4,000 workers fired by Bashir but needs up to \$5 billion in donor support for

next year alone. That dilemma gives Atbara's activists pause. "Honestly we have fears (of a new coup) if the main issues aren't solved," said 70-year-old Ali Abdallah, a former national head of the railway union imprisoned under Bashir and now a respected figure among the townspeople. The United States says it hopes to be able to lift sanctions imposed in 1993 over allegations Bashir's Islamist government supported terrorism, so that donor money can flow. Western countries are wary, but also fear that instability in Sudan will increase migration to Europe and encourage Islamist militants. It will take time to heal local wounds.

When protests began in December, security forces opened fire, killing, among others, 23-year-old engineering student Tareq Ahmed. "He was not political person but fed up with the regime and inflation," said his father driving on pot-holed roads around Atbara to show its neglect. He could not bring himself to go to the spot where his son got killed but stopped at the university where students have painted his face on a wall to keep memories fresh. There he struggled to hold back his tears. "He sacrificed himself for a change in Sudan," he said. "We will never forget." — Reuters

Protest-hit Iran says 'enemy conspiracy' defeated

TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the country's people had defeated an "enemy conspiracy" behind a wave of violent protests and were celebrating their victory. Rouhani blamed the deadly unrest on "anarchists" who took to the streets "based on a plot that the region's reactionary, the Zionists and Americans hatched", referring respectively to Saudi Arabia, Israel and the US.

The demonstrations erupted in sanctions-hit Iran on Friday, hours after the price of petrol was raised by as much as 200 percent. Motorists blocked highways in Tehran before the unrest spread to at least 40 urban centres, with petrol pumps torched, police stations attacked and shops looted. Officials have confirmed five deaths, including of three security personnel stabbed by "rioters". In Shahriar, west of Tehran, mourners chanted "Death to America" in a funeral procession on Wednesday for one of those killed, a Revolutionary Guards commander. The UN human rights office said it was alarmed by reports live ammunition had caused a "significant number of deaths". Amnesty International said more than 100 demonstrators were believed to have been killed, and that the real toll could be as high as 200. The full extent of the bloodshed was difficult to ascertain given a near-total internet blackout since the weekend.

'Armed anarchists'

Rouhani told a cabinet meeting that "our people have been victorious against ... the enemy's conspiracy. "Those anarchists who came out onto the streets were few in number," he said, insisting "this is the biggest display of the power of the nation of Iran". Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said late Tuesday that "the recent actions were security issues, not from the people... We have repelled the enemy." Khamenei has previously blamed the unrest on the Pahlavi royal family ousted in the 1979 Islamic Revolution



GORGAN, Iran: Iranian government supporters rally in support of the Islamic republic's authorities and supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (portraits), in the northeastern Iranian region of Ghorghan. — AFP

and armed opposition group the People's Mujahedeen of Iran, which Tehran considers a "terrorist" cult. In Shahriar, thousands of mourners trailed behind a truck carrying a coffin, clutching portraits of the slain Guard and posters that read "Down with USA". They passed burned-out buildings, including a bank, post office and shopping centre. One of the mourners, Younes Abutalebi, told AFP: "My pension is 18 million rials (\$146). If it was cut... I would go begging — but I wouldn't set fire to a bank." Rallies against the unrest were also held in Arak, Ardebil and Ghorghan, among other cities.

Iran's economy has been battered since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a 2015 nuclear agreement and reimposed sanctions. Tensions have soared this year, with the US widening its sanctions to include Khamenei and other key entities as Iran cut its nuclear commitments. The arch-foes came to the brink of a military confrontation in June when Iran downed a US drone and Trump ordered retaliatory strikes before cancelling them at the last minute. — AFP

Gay Saudi journalists detained in Australia after asylum bid

SYDNEY: Two gay Saudi journalists who sought asylum in Australia after being threatened at home over their relationship have been held for weeks at an immigration detention centre, their lawyer said Wednesday. The couple arrived in Australia in mid-October on tourist visas but was singled out by airport customs officials - then taken into detention - when they admitted plans to seek asylum, lawyer Alison Battison said. "Australia being very well known for being... a safe place for LGBTI people, they were incredibly surprised and distressed," she said.

One of the men — who worked for Saudi Arabia's media ministry and regularly assisted visiting international news organizations - said they came under pressure from authorities after a dissident leaked sensitive documents to foreign media. "I was called into a prison on the outskirts of Riyadh by the state security," he told ABC, adding they "hinted that they realized I was in a relationship with my partner and that I should stop working with the foreign media". Battison said the men had not leaked any documents, but were swept up in a wider crackdown by Saudi authorities in the wake of Khashoggi's murder. In August, one of the men received a phone call from a relative warning they knew of their gay relationship and if it wasn't ended his partner would be killed. Police followed that up with separate calls asking them to come in for questioning, which led to their decision to flee. Homosexuality is illegal in Saudi Arabia and punishable by death. Battison says the two men have been separated in detention as one is receiving medical treatment, while the other is housed with convicted criminals awaiting deportation. — AFP

Greece: Turkey needs to end 'blackmail' for migrant aid

Koumoutsakos voices alarm over Erdogan's threats

WASHINGTON: Greece's migration minister said that Turkey needs to stop "blackmail" if it wants more EU aid, saying its loaded language had prompted a spike in movement toward Greek shores. Speaking to AFP on a visit to Washington, Giorgos Koumoutsakos voiced alarm over threats by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other Turkish officials to "open the gates" to Europe if it does not provide more support. When Turkey "keeps repeating that we're going to open the floodgates, what they (migrants) do is they move closer to the floodgates waiting for them to open," said Koumoutsakos, citing a 240 percent increase in migrant arrivals on Greek shores since May.

Koumoutsakos said that Greece nonetheless wanted the European Union to "positively consider" Turkey's request for assistance beyond the six billion euros (\$6.6 billion) committed in 2016 to stop migrants. "But the fact that Turkey asked for this money by blackmail or threats does not create the necessary political climate for the Europeans to decide to give the money," he said. "Europe cannot act under threats or blackmail. As Europeans should understand the situation that the Turks are faced with, Ankara should on its part realize that this is not the way to deal with Europe," he said.

Conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who took power in July elections, has pledged a tougher approach on

migration than the previous leftist government, which allowed refugees from Syria and other troubled countries to land. Greece on Wednesday said it would overhaul its overcrowded camps on its islands facing Turkey, with asylum-seekers now to be locked up until they are either granted refugee status or rejected and sent back to Turkey.

Some 3.6 million Syrian refugees are living in Turkey after a brutal civil war engulfed their country, and Greece is the key transit point into the European Union. Greece's tightening controls have been criticized by human rights groups as inhumane. Koumoutsakos defended the steps, saying that ordinary Greeks on islands had migration fatigue and that, in contrast with the previous government of Alexis Tsipras, "we are looking not only at the humanitarian aspect, but the security aspect."

Koumoutsakos said he discussed Greece's stance with US lawmakers as well as Chad Wolf, the acting secretary of homeland security. Immigration is a signature issue for President Donald Trump, who has vowed to build a wall on the Mexican border and whose administration has tried to discourage the arrival of migrants from violence-ravaged Central America by separating parents from their children.

Koumoutsakos said that Greece was seeking "enhanced cooperation" with the United States, including on border con-

health coverage and better health and well-being for all, as in WHO's vision, it is vital that prisons are seen as a window of opportunity to change lifestyles and ensure that no one is left behind," she said.

The WHO said in a statement on its report that it found "the general state of monitoring and surveillance systems for health in prisons is poor". It warned prisoners with undiagnosed and untreated health conditions will "add to the public health burden in the outside community after their release". The report said that mental health was a key issue, especially after release, when prisoners are most at risk of suicide, self-harm and drug overdoses. WHO said this meant care during the transition phase was "critical".

The report found that 13.5 percent of deaths in prison were caused by suicide and that 14 percent of EU states do not screen for severe mental health disorders on arrival in prison. Europe's prisons also have a reoccurring problem of overcrowding, which can affect the health of detainees. An estimated 6 million people are being incarcerated each year in the region, according to WHO. Eight countries including France, Italy and Portugal have "a serious overall problem" with overcrowding, according to a 2018 study by the Council of Europe.—AFP



ATHENS: Afghan refugees walk to their tents outside Eleonas refugee camp in Athens. —AFP

rol, but that the two countries' situations were dissimilar. Turkey - angered by criticism of its assault on Kurdish fighters in Syria - has also threatened to send fighters from the Islamic State group captured

in Syria back to their European countries of origin even if their governments do not want them. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu has said that Turkey cannot be "a hotel" for the extremists. —AFP

Europe's prisons failing to monitor inmates' health

COPENHAGEN: Prison authorities in Europe are not doing enough to monitor the health of inmates, meaning prisoners are more likely to suffer untreated conditions and are released without adequate support, the World Health Organization said yesterday. The UN body warned that such failings will come at a "high cost" for society at large as they add to the public health burden. The WHO collected the data of 39 European countries between 2016 and 2017 and recommended that prisons test for tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, mental health problems and addictions.

"A prison sentence takes away a person's liberty; it should not also take away their health and their right to health," said Dr Bente Mikkelsen of WHO's Europe branch, according to a statement from the body. She said the prison population has a "disproportionate disease burden". "To achieve universal

Five dead in Sicily depot explosion

ROME: Five people died Wednesday as a result of two explosions at a fireworks factory in Sicily, firefighters and police said after the incident at the family-run firm. The late afternoon blasts immediately killed two workmen and the 71-year-old wife of the owner of the Costa company in Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, in Sicily's Messina region.

The owner's son had attempted to save her and was one of four people taken to hospital with serious injuries, police said. One of the injured later died

in hospital. "According to the initial evidence, it seems that there were two explosions," police commander Giancarmine Carusone said. He added that it was believed sparks from welding equipment had triggered the blasts.

A worker who had been reported missing was later discovered dead in the rubble. One employee who was inside the depot at the time of the explosion was pulled out alive. Firefighters were continuing to search for further victims. The local prosecutor's office opened an inquiry into the disaster. Staff were preparing for New Year celebrations comprising traditional firework displays across the south of Italy designed to chase away evil spirits. Preparations for such displays, a tradition dating back to the 1500s, annually see a number of fatal incidents. —AFP

International

Democrat debate exposes divides despite a united front on Trump

Buttigieg faces challenges in attracting black voters

ATLANTA: Divides between Democrats vying to challenge President Donald Trump in the 2020 election were laid bare in a combative debate Wednesday, as the campaign's rising star Pete Buttigieg acknowledged he faced challenges in attracting black voters. Buttigieg, the contest's youngest candidate who occupies the same moderate lane as frontrunner Joe Biden, offered a unifying message as a way to bring Democrats and Republicans toward a broad political middle.

Democrats can seize a majority on issues like immigration and guns "if we can galvanize, not polarize that majority," Buttigieg told the debate in Georgia. But after an opening phase dominated by talk of impeachment of Trump, participants in the fifth Democratic debate locked horns over the costly universal health care program supported by liberal senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

"I believe that commanding people to accept that option, whether we wait three years as Senator Warren has proposed or whether you do it right out of the gate is not the right approach to unify the American people around a very, very big transformation that we now have an opportunity to deliver," Buttigieg said. Former vice president Biden also took aim at the trillion-dollar reform, saying it would be wiser to build on existing Obamacare and provide a public option. "The fact is that right now the vast majority of Democrats do not support Medicare for All," Biden said.

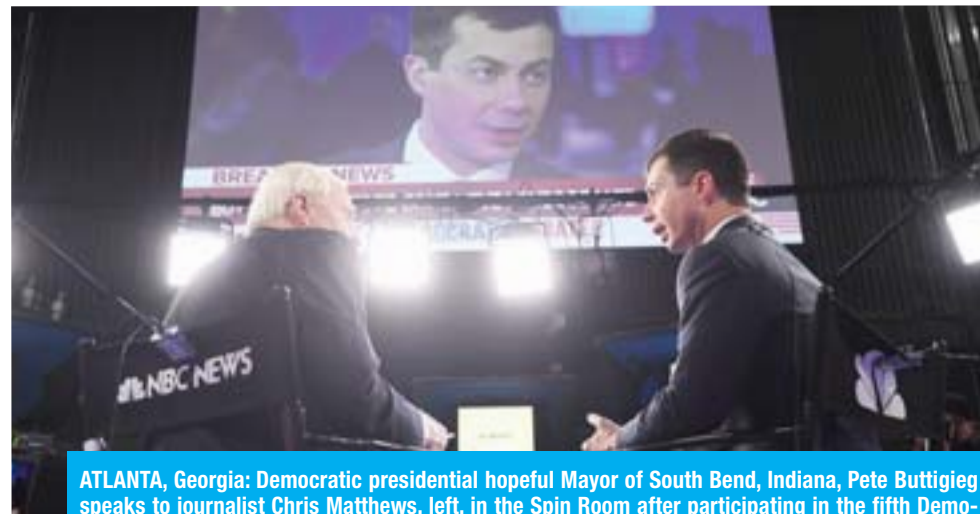
Biden is the face of the Democratic Party es-

tablishment and is the current frontrunner. He turned 77 on Wednesday and appeared to stumble over his words on several occasions, including during his opening remarks. Buttigieg, the military veteran mayor of South Bend, Indiana, who at 37 is less than half Biden's age, sought to paint himself as a young outsider who should be elected commander-in-chief despite his slender resume.

"I get it's not traditional establishment Washington experience, but I would argue we need something very different right now," Buttigieg, mayor of a small city in Indiana, told his rivals. But when pressed by Senator Kamala Harris, the only black woman in the race, about his low polling among African-American voters, Buttigieg acknowledged he had yet to convince one of the party's most important constituencies. "I welcome the challenge of connecting with black voters in America who don't yet know me," said Buttigieg, the first major openly-gay US presidential candidate.

"While I do not have the experience of ever having been discriminated against because of the color of my skin, I do have the experience of sometimes feeling like a stranger in my own country." Biden leads in national polling, followed by Warren and Sanders. But Buttigieg has cracked into the top tier in the past month, and now tops the polls in Iowa which stages the first nomination contest in February.

Warren was the candidate to watch last month but her campaign has plateaued. She has made headway by pledging to end a system that she



ATLANTA, Georgia: Democratic presidential hopeful Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, Pete Buttigieg speaks to journalist Chris Matthews, left, in the Spin Room after participating in the fifth Democratic primary debate of the 2020 presidential campaign season co-hosted by MSNBC and The Washington Post at Tyler Perry Studios in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

described during the debate as working "better for... the rich and well-connected, and worse and worse for everyone else." "I'm tired of freeloading billionaires," she said. As the 10 qualifying candidates rumbled in their nationally televised showdown, dominating the political discourse is the high-stakes impeachment hearings into Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

Democrats accuse Trump of conditioning mil-

itary aid and a White House meeting on Kiev's announcing investigations of Biden and his son Hunter, who worked with a Ukrainian energy company while his father was vice president. But some candidates warned that obsessing over the president could sabotage Democrats' efforts. "We cannot simply be consumed by Donald Trump," Sanders said. "Because if we are, you know what? We're going to lose the election." — AFP

Quid pro quo: Latin phrase dominates US impeachment

NEW YORK: "Quid pro quo." There's no escaping the Latin phrase in America right now. It's front and center of impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump and omnipresent across airwaves and social media. The expression, literally meaning "something for something," made headlines again Wednesday when US ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland told lawmakers Trump had sought such a deal with Ukraine. The Democratic-led investigation is probing whether Trump abused his position as president by withholding aid in the hope Ukraine would dig dirt on potential 2020 rival Joe Biden.

The Democrats allege that Trump wanted Ukraine to open a corruption probe into Biden and his son Hunter in exchange for a coveted White House summit and/or \$391 million of military aid—in other words a "quid pro quo." If the House of Representatives, which has a Democratic majority, votes to

impeach him, Trump will face trial in the Senate to decide whether he be removed from office. Pushing back at the accusation, Trump, his Republican supporters and right-wing commentators have chosen a rallying cry: there was "no quid pro quo."

Repeated ad nauseam: the phrase echoes the "no collusion" mantra adopted by the president during special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Linguists say using the same expression over and over again is a clever way of lodging a specific idea in voters' brains. Since Republicans have the majority in the Senate, impeachment is unlikely. But Democrats hope they can at least convince voters that Trump abused his position to serve his political interests, thereby encouraging them to vote him out of office next year. It is unclear how impactful the phrase is, however.

'Bribery'

Earlier this month, 33 American writers signed a letter to The New York Times asking it to stop using the phrase in regard to the impeachment inquiry. "Most people don't understand what it means, and in any case it doesn't refer only to a crime," they wrote. "Asking for a favor is not a criminal act; we frequently demand things from foreign countries before giving them aid, like asking them to improve their human rights record," they added. — AFP

Diplomat implicates Trump in explosive testimony

WASHINGTON: A senior US diplomat directly implicated President Donald Trump Wednesday in a scheme to force Ukraine to probe a political rival, in bombshell testimony to a televised impeachment hearing. Gordon Sondland, the ambassador to the European Union, told lawmakers he followed the president's orders in seeking a "quid pro quo" deal for Ukraine to investigate Democrat Joe Biden in exchange for a White House summit.

Sondland said Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani led the effort at Trump's direction to pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky for the investigation and that top officials in the White House and State Department knew about it. The unexpectedly damning testimony drew a sharp backlash from Trump who tweeted: "This Witch Hunt must end NOW. So bad for our Country!". Trump said he barely knew Sondland and had not spoken to him much, despite the senior diplomat having donated \$1 million to his inauguration and testifying that he had spoken to the president some 20 times while ambassador.

Bombshell testimony

Democrats said Sondland's seven hours of tes-

timony before the House Intelligence Committee had bolstered their case for Trump's impeachment for what they have labeled "extortion". "Today's testimony is among the most significant evidence to date," said committee chairman Adam Schiff. "It goes right to the heart of the issue of bribery as well as other potential high crimes or misdemeanors." A succession of Democrats hoping to win the nomination to take on Trump in next year's election also said the testimony had strengthened the case for impeachment as the issue dominated the opening exchanges in their latest televised primary debate.

Sondland said Trump directed him and two other senior diplomats to work with Giuliani. From early in the year, Giuliani mounted a pressure campaign on Zelensky's government to investigate Biden over his son Hunter's ties to a Ukrainian energy company, Burisma, and to probe a conspiracy theory espoused by Trump that Ukraine helped Democrats against him in 2016. Biden is one of the favorites to challenge Trump in next year's presidential election.

"Mr. Giuliani demanded that Ukraine make a public statement announcing the investigations of the 2016 election/DNC server and Burisma," Sondland told the panel. "Mr. Giuliani's requests were a quid pro quo for arranging a White House visit for President Zelensky." Far from being a "rogue" operation outside normal US diplomatic channels, Sondland told the hearing top officials — including Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo — were kept constantly informed. "We followed the president's orders," he said. — AFP

International

Bolivia's indigenous divided over ousted champ Morales

Bolivia's first indigenous president exiled in Mexico

EL ALTO: In the high-altitude Bolivian city of El Alto, perched on barren steppe above the capital, indigenous activists have led the fight for the return of unseated president Evo Morales. Hundreds have blockaded a major power plant and fought deadly battles with security forces. Others have marched down into La Paz carrying the colorful Wiphala - a checkered flag symbolic of Andean ethnic groups - to pressure conservative caretaker President Jeanine Anez.

El Alto, however, has a more complex story to tell: of fault lines among Bolivia's many indigenous communities, whose views on Morales are far from uniform in a country already being ripped apart by political divides. "They tell us we're Indians: we're the black race, the cursed race," said Jaime Pablo, a protest leader from a highland province, as he blockaded the plant supplying La Paz with gasoline, diesel and cooking gas.

Pablo is annoyed about splits with other local indigenous leaders, whom he said were in talks with the government to end protests in return for speedy elections. "The government wants to divide us. How? They're grabbing our leaders and ex-leaders, and they're talking with them... But we've determined we're not going to re-

spect that." In El Alto, where military and police punched through the blockade on Tuesday leaving eight dead, many indigenous groups are calling for peace and looking beyond Morales' rule, with some removing blockades and returning to work.

Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous leader, fled to Mexico this month under pressure from protests, allies, the police and the military, over allegations of rigging an October election. Since his Nov 10 resignation, Bolivia has been in a standoff between opponents, who say he clung to power too long, and loyalists, who say he brought stability and a voice to the poor. Around 30 people have been killed, with blockades leaving cities low on food and fuel.

'He's already gone'

Morales' presidency saw economic progress and increased political participation for indigenous peoples, who comprise over 40% of the 11 million population. But he alienated some who once hailed him as their champion. Morales, now 60, clashed with native groups over land development, offered benefits to favored communities and sidestepped term limits. Macario Velasquez,

a 76-year-old coca, orange and coffee farmer from the mountain region of Yungas, supported Morales but cannot see him returning.

"He's already gone. We have to look for someone else to vote for now," he said. "I hope the situation calms down because we need to work, pay debts. The children need to go to school." Morales' opponents claim he stoked ethnic divisions, lavishing benefits on his own Aymara people, while ignoring smaller groups and the large mixed-race population. Allies deny that and Morales could not be reached for comment. Yet many in Bolivia say ethnic differences are increasingly irrelevant, with ever more indigenous people reaching the upper echelons of business and politics.

"The middle class today, if you look around, is incredibly diverse," said Félix Patzi, Aymara governor of greater La Paz, who opposes Morales. Nonetheless, indigenous support for Morales, particularly from the Aymara, is a driving force in the challenge to Anez's interim government, with daily marches. The 52-year-old former senator angered many with quick moves to draw a line under Morales. She appointed a cabinet initially composed almost entirely of non-indigenous people,

while making Christianity central in ceremonies.

Old Tweets disparaging indigenous ceremonies resurfaced, before being deleted, while she cut ties with Morales' leftist allies, including Venezuela and Cuba. "She talks so much of democracy but she raises the Bible with one hand, and uses her other hand to throw stones at us," said Sonia Marka, a farmer dressed in a traditional "pollera" dress, who walked over four hours to demonstrate in La Paz. Anez says she is focused only on new elections and denies racism. Her supporters note Morales' last cabinet only had three indigenous members.

Allegations of police and military brutality have compounded frustrations. A confrontation with pro-Morales coca growers near Cochabamba city killed nine protesters. The Wiphala - often displayed during Morales' government next to Bolivia's tricolor flag - has become a symbol for indigenous opposition. In response, some police cut it from uniforms, prompting an apology from a senior officer. "There's been a lack of respect for the Wiphala," said Josue Pilloco, a construction worker from La Paz, who said he was shot by police with rubber bullets while walking back from work. — Reuters

Canadian vaping study details the danger from 'popcorn lung'

WASHINGTON: A 17-year-old Canadian nearly lost his lungs after five months of intensive vaping, but the ingredient suspected of doing the damage, diacetyl, is different from the substance US authorities blame for dozens of deaths. The case, described yesterday in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ), deepens the mysteries surrounding e-cigarettes, which have grown so popular US President Donald Trump earlier this week backed away from a proposed ban on certain vaping flavors, fearing such a move could cost him votes.

Vaping has been blamed for 42 deaths in the United States since the past summer. Canada has been relatively spared, with only eight identified patients, and no deaths. The CMAJ study centers around a 17-year-old male vaper who was in good health and vaping daily, particularly green apple and cotton candy flavored refills as well as those containing THC, the psychoactive component of marijuana which Canada legalized in October of last year.

The lesions that appeared in his lungs differed from those seen in the US, where more than 2,000 people have fallen ill from what authorities call e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI). In the US, the lungs of patients presented various injuries, but mainly alveolar lesions in the air sacs at the end of the airways. Some had suffered chemical-like burns. US inves-



WASHINGTON: In this file illustration, a man exhales smoke from an electronic cigarette in Washington, DC. —AFP

tigators have recently concluded that the culprit is vitamin E oil, which is added to liquid e-cigarette refills, particularly those containing THC.

But in Canada, doctors in the CMAJ study determined the lungs of the young vaper suffered from bronchiolitis obliterans, which is inflammation of the small airways off the lungs called bronchioles. The patient had gone to the emergency room after developing a persistent cough and doctors, believing he had pneumonia, first prescribed antibiotics, before hospitalizing him and putting him on life support.

The young man's condition grew so dire a double lung transplant was considered before his condition improved. He stayed 47 days at the hospital, his doctors told AFP. His injuries were similar to those observed in people suffering from "popcorn lung," a condition found in workers in a microwave popcorn factory who had accidentally inhaled diacetyl, a product used by the food industry which gives popcorn a buttery flavor. —AFP

Kids of Colombia's peace growing up among landmines

LA MONTANITA: The children in the school playground are the kids of former guerrillas, born during the peace process that allowed their parents to finally lay down their arms. But these heirs to Colombia's peace are growing up learning to watch their step - to avoid the conflict's deadly legacy, landmines. "What does an anti-personnel mine do?" A mischievous little boy jumps up and answers: "Boom!" There are titters from the group. But calmly a little girl adds: "It explodes when you touch it or when you walk on it. And it kills you."

Sitting in their recreation area, some 15 children huddle with a mine-risk education team (ERM) visiting their isolated primary school, located at the end of a path in the municipality of La Montanita, in the southern department of Caqueta. The children react to photos shown by the educators, four former rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which has become a political party since disarming under a 2016 agreement. "Look, there's a bomb that looks like a lollipop," says one kid pointing to a detail in a picture. Frowning, her eyes move across the other - more graphic - images, showing the maimed victims of anti-personnel mines, amputees missing hands or legs.

Silent killers

The ERM team teaches the children how

to behave in an environment that contains these silent killers, lying in wait in the ground, sown by one or other of the warring factions - leftist guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries or security forces - over the years. They are still used by the National Liberation Army (ELN), the country's last fully active rebel force, by FARC dissidents, and by the narco-trafficking gangs protecting plantations of marijuana or coca, the raw material for cocaine. Colombia is second only to Afghanistan as the country most affected by landmines.

Since 1985 abandoned landmines and unexploded ordnance have maimed nearly 12,000 people in Colombia - killing 20 percent of them outright - according to the government's high commission for peace. More than a quarter of civilian victims of the mines are children and adolescents, says a report from the National Center for Historical Memory. As they run about and play on the fringes of the jungle, children can come across a lethal mine planted on the edge of a path. Many are made of colored plastic, some disguised as commonplace objects like a soda bottle.

Most vulnerable

One member of the ERM team is 28-year-old Marcela Albino, who was only a little older than these children when she "joined the ranks of the FARC, at 13." "I stayed there for 13 years. Half my life," she said. Since handing in her rifle as part of a group of some 7,000 FARC ex-combatants in 2016, she has been working with children in the Agua Bonita reintegration zone, 45 minutes along a mountain trail from La Montanita. —AFP

International

Women take matters into own fists in Mexico's femicide crisis

Mexico City - one of the most dangerous countries to be woman

MEXICO CITY: Elena's husband had strangled and beaten her, but it was the moment he slammed one of their twin baby girls against the bed that she decided she had to get out. That was eight years ago. She thought she and her daughters had escaped from danger, until she got a message on her cell phone recently about strange men prowling outside their school. The message brought her traumatic memories of violence and helplessness rushing back. It also convinced Elena, a slight single mom of 39, that it was time to take matters into her own hands again. Or rather, her own fists: she signed herself and her daughters up for self-defense classes for women and girls offered by the government of her hometown, Mexico City - capital of one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a woman. Mexico has the most femicides of any country in Latin America, according to Amnesty International. The country was one of the first in the world to recognize femicide as a specific crime, which it did in 2007. But that has failed to stop rampant violence against women. More than nine are murdered in the country every day, according to UN Women.

Brains over brawn

Elena - whose name has been changed for her protection - knows what it means to live in the middle of this crisis. She still remembers the sensation of her estranged husband strangling her during an argument. "He grabbed my neck. He was suffocating me. He pushed me against the wall while one of the babies was watching. I was terrified thinking that he could hurt my daughters," she said.

Then came the incident that prompted her to leave.

"He took one of my daughters and threw her against the bed.... She was just a baby, defenseless," she said through sobs. Now, she and her daughters are learning to defend themselves in a university classroom in Azcapotzalco, a neighborhood on the sprawling capital's north side.

Launched this year, the women-only self-defense courses have drawn participants from all walks of life: mothers trying to protect themselves and their children, students afraid to walk alone at night, commuters fed up with harassment on public transportation. "Sometimes we women think we don't have the physical strength to escape from an attack. But I've learned here that it all depends how you react," Elena said, this time speaking in a steely voice. "Like they say, brains are better than brawn."

Bags, umbrellas as weapons

Beatriz Camacho, a 50-year-old teacher, signed up for the courses to learn to protect herself on the subway. She had been groped several times. "The last time, I kicked my attacker all the way out of the train and handed him over to the policeman on duty at the station," said Camacho, a tall, striking woman fond of make-up and plunging necklines.

The Azcapotzalco district has offered five of the free, six-week self-defense courses in the past six months. Several other Mexico City districts are doing the same. Students learn boxing and martial arts from Sabina, a young transsexual woman with punk style and no shortage of ways to turn bags, umbrellas or body parts into weapons. "These workshops are about giving women tools and techniques to protect them-



MEXICO CITY: A group of young women attend a self-defense class in Mexico City. —AFP

selves," said Ana Viveros, head of the district's gender equality program.

'Glitter Revolution'

The level of violence against women in Mexico is staggering. Two in three Mexican women say they have been victims in some form, according to the national statistics institute. International attention has often focused on the most horrific flashpoints such as Ciudad Juarez, on the US border, where rights groups estimate more than 1,500 women were raped, killed and

dumped in the desert, or simply disappeared without a trace, in the 1990s.

But cosmopolitan Mexico City is not exempt. The capital has been swept by protests this year over rampant violence against women, triggered by several notorious cases, including that of a 17-year-old girl who was allegedly raped by four police officers inside their patrol car in Azcapotzalco. The movement is now known as the "Glitter Revolution," after protesters doused the capital's security minister in pink glitter at one demonstration. —AFP

More US children die in mass shootings at home than at school

AUSTIN: Three out of four US children and teens killed in mass shootings over the past decade were victims of domestic violence and generally died in their homes, according to a study released yesterday by the gun control group Everytown. While the specter of school shootings looms darkly in the minds of American parents who remember massacres in Newtown, Connecticut; Parkland, Florida, and around the country, the group's review of shootings from 2009 through 2018 found far more children are killed in their own homes.

"These are not random acts of violence, yet people have the perception that the killings come out of nowhere," said Sarah Burd-Sharps, Everytown's research director. "That is simply not the truth." The Everytown report, based on police and court records, as well as media reports, found that 54% of mass shootings involved the shooter killing a family member or intimate partner. A total of 1,121 people were killed in 194 mass shootings in the decade examined - one-third of whom were children or teens.

Nearly two-thirds of all mass shootings took place entirely inside homes, the study found. Burd-

Sharps said Everytown hopes that its report helps the public gain more understanding about the statistical realities of mass shootings, which it defines as an incident that kills at least four people, excluding the shooter. The federal government and other groups set a lower threshold for what constitutes a mass shooting. Those definitions can result in higher totals than Everytown's count.

Only 1% of the nearly 35,000 gun deaths averaged in the United States each year in the past decade involved mass shootings, but Burd-Sharps said she believes public interest in them can help propel gun-safety legislation that could cut gun deaths across the board. At the top of Everytown's wish list is a "red flag" law that would allow family members or law enforcement officers to petition a judge to seize firearms from a person they think is a threat to themselves or others. The group also believes a comprehensive federal law requiring background checks on all gun sales would quickly be effective in decreasing gun deaths.

The link between domestic violence in mass shootings was seen this week in San Diego, when a man who had a restraining order against him killed his wife and three of their four young sons before taking his own life. "When you look at all these cases of kids who lost their lives, if some family member had been able to heed the warning signs and temporarily had guns removed from the home, many of those children would still be alive," Burd-Sharps said. —Reuters

Google tightens political ads policy to thwart abuse

SAN FRANCISCO: Google on Wednesday updated how it handles political ads as online platforms remain under pressure to avoid being used to spread misleading information intended to influence voters. The internet company said its rules already ban any advertiser, including those with political messages, from lying in ads. But it is making its policy more clear and adding examples of how that prohibits content such as doctored or manipulated images or video.

"It's against our policies for any advertiser to make a false claim - whether it's a claim about the price of a chair or a claim that you can vote by text message, that election day is postponed, or that a candidate has died," Google ads product management vice president Scott Spencer said in an online post. Examples of banned ad material included ads or links to information making demonstrably false claims that could undermine voter trust or participation in elections. "Of course, we recognize that robust political dialogue is an important part of democracy, and no one can sensibly adjudicate every political claim, counterclaim, and insinuation," Spencer said.

"So we expect that the number of political ads on which we take action will be very limited - but we will continue to do so for clear violations." Google's main formats for political advertising are ads posted along with search query results, those shown at video viewing service YouTube, and display ads that appear on websites. Google will also limit targeting of political ads to general categories such as age, gender, or postal code level location.

"Political advertisers can, of course, continue to do contextual targeting, such as serving ads to people reading or watching a story about, say, the economy," Spencer said. "This will align our approach to election ads with long-established practices in media such as TV, radio, and print, and result in election ads being more widely seen and available for public discussion." Google will begin enforcing the changes in Britain within a week and throughout the EU by the end of the year, then in the rest of the world starting January 6, according to Spencer.

Speech vs Truth

Snap this week confirmed that it checks political ads at Snapchat to make sure they are not deceptive or misleading and thus enforce its ban on such material. The strategy seems to be a middle ground between Facebook's controversial tolerance of proven lies in political ads and Twitter's decision to ban them all together. —AFP

Sri Lanka's ruling siblings: New leader swears in brother as PM

Charges dropped against immune new Sri Lanka president

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's newly elected president Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday swore in his elder brother, former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, as prime minister, cementing the powerful family's political comeback. The appointment of Mahinda Rajapaksa, 74, came hours after the former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe tendered his resignation following the defeat of his party's candidate in a presidential election to Gotabaya Rajapaksa over the weekend.

It is the first time in Sri Lankan history that two siblings have held the two top political positions, although Mahinda is only in charge of a caretaker government until parliamentary elections next year. In a ceremony in the capital Colombo yesterday, Gotabaya swore in his brother as their respective wives, sons and daughters-in-law looked on. "I wish to congratulate and extend my warmest wishes to Hon Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister of the Democratic, Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka," Gotabaya tweeted afterwards.

Gotabaya, 70, had earlier served as defense chief under his brother Mahinda, who himself served as president from 2005-2015. Mahinda, who had been Sri Lanka's opposition leader since January, has held the prime minister's post twice before. He is set to be his party's candidate in a parliamentary election expected around April. The former president, popular with the Sinhalese majority for overseeing the end of a 26-year long civil

war, is broadly seen as a shoo-in.

"The Rajapaksa brand, as evidenced by the election, remains extremely strong," said Akhil Bery, Eurasia's South Asia analyst, adding that Mahinda is perceived to be even more popular than his younger brother. The siblings face a tall order to revive Sri Lanka's economy, which is in its deepest slump in nearly two decades following Easter Sunday Islamist attacks that killed over 250 people in churches and hotels. That hurt the rupee and the all-important tourism sector.

Gotabaya, who oversaw the defeat of Tamil separatists as his brother's defense chief a decade ago, won the election after promising to secure the country against militant threats. His economic manifesto targets average growth of at least 6.5%, compared with 3.2% in 2018, but economists are worried his plans may strain coffers. Managing a record \$3 billion in annual external debt repayments over the next five years will be another challenge.

Some investors see Rajapaksa as an experienced hand who will bring political stability to the island. Sri Lanka's stock index and rupee currency have gained 1.9% and 0.5% respectively since his election. Rights groups and minorities, however, accuse the Rajapaksas of human rights violations during the war and have expressed concerns of renewed ethnic tensions following the elections. The brothers have denied wrongdoing.

religious divisions are irrevocable and authorities claim any attempt to reintegrate communities could trigger new unrest.

But some Muslims in Kyaukphyu have managed to maintain a cautious relationship with Buddhist friends, raising hopes that old communal bonds may not be completely severed. "The people from the town didn't attack us," Htoo Maung says, suggesting outsiders were to blame. Kyaukphyu ethnic Rakhine MP Kyaw Than insists his town is ready to welcome the Muslims back, but can only do so with the government's green light. "Everyone in the camp is a citizen," he says, decrying the "lack of humanity" shown to the town's Muslim population.

'We are not illegal'

But there is no forgetting the new social order. Htoo Maung, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, and the other Muslims from the camp are only permitted to visit town for two hours at a time under the chaperone of weapon-wielding police.

He is bereft at the loss of his old life. "I feel so sad - I never imagined this could happen," Htoo Maung tells AFP, as he looks at the overgrown patch of land where his house once stood. He adds: "We are not illegal." He and many others in the camp are Kaman Muslims. Unlike the Rohingya, they are an officially recognized minority in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. But their status did little to help them as the unrest spread. —AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's former president Mahinda Rajapaksa looks on as he takes oath as country's Prime Minister during the swearing-in ceremony in Colombo.—AFP

Charges dropped

Meanwhile, corruption charges against Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa were dropped yesterday by a court, which handed his passport back as he acquired immunity from prosecution after being elected last weekend. Under Sri Lanka's constitution, no court proceedings can be maintained against a serving president. However, action could be taken after he leaves office.

The High Court had indicted Rajapaksa in

September last year on charges of siphoning off 33 million rupees (around \$185,000) in state funds to build a memorial for his parents. The court also released his passport which had been impounded, allowing him to make his first overseas trip as president to India next week at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rajapaksa was being tried before a special court established by the former government to expedite high-profile corruption cases. Rajapaksa, 70, had pleaded not guilty. —Agencies

Myanmar town offers glimmer of hope for Muslims enduring 'apartheid'

KYAUKPHYU: Htoo Maung sits down to lunch, sharing a bowl of traditional noodle soup with old friends, an ordinary act that has become extraordinary in Myanmar's Rakhine state - because he is Muslim, and they are Buddhist. They used to live side by side as neighbors. But now he can only visit them under a strict curfew enforced by armed guards before he must return to the muddy camp where he and the rest of Kyaukphyu town's Muslims have been confined for seven years. In 2012 inter-communal unrest swept through swathes of western Myanmar, including Htoo Maung's home town, after allegations spread that a Buddhist woman had been raped by Muslim men.

Mobs ransacked homes and police rounded up Muslims for their "own safety" to sites that would later be turned into camps. More than 200 died, tens of thousands were displaced and the stage was set for the bloody purge of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in northern Rakhine five years later. Many fear the enduring deep sectarian suspicions and

Pope meets Buddhist patriarch on a visit to promote harmony

BANGKOK: Pope Francis met with Thailand's supreme Buddhist patriarch yesterday in a gilded Bangkok temple on the first full day of his Asia tour aimed at promoting religious harmony. This is the pontiff's first visit to Buddhist-majority Thailand - where just over 0.5 percent of the population are Catholics - before he jets off to Japan on Saturday.

He is pushing a message of inter-faith peace on a four-day visit that will see him lead a mass later for tens of thousands of faithful from across Southeast Asia. The 82-year-old head of the Catholic church also delivered impassioned remarks about the plight of vulnerable children and women who he said deserved a "dignified" future. In a highly symbolic meeting, he sat down with Thailand's supreme Buddhist patriarch Somdej Phra Maha Muneewong at the Ratchabophit temple in Bangkok's historic old quarter.

"Catholics have enjoyed freedom in religious practice, despite their being in a minority, and for many years have lived in harmony with their

Buddhist brothers and sisters," the Pope said in a speech at the meeting. The pair sat before a brilliant gold Buddha statue inside the ornate temple, built 150 years ago by the former Thai King — the supreme patriarch barefoot and draped in orange robes as they spoke. The Pope reciprocated the gesture, removing his shoes for part of the tete-a-tete.

In an earlier speech, the Pope said the meeting was "a sign of the importance and urgency of promoting friendship and inter-religious dialogue". It was the same temple visited by John Paul II on the last papal trip to Thailand in 1984. This visit coincides with the 350th anniversary of the founding of the "Mission de Siam", marking the first papal mission from Europe in the 17th century. Though Christianity's first visitors were initially met with scepticism, today Thailand's nearly 400,000 Catholics face little discrimination.

Message for migrants

The head of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics met with Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha at a red-carpet welcome ceremony at the government guest house, before addressing medical staff at Bangkok's St. Louis hospital. He was accompanied throughout the day by his cousin Sister Ana Rosa, who has lived in Thailand for decades and is helping the pontiff as a translator. —AFP

International

Australians flee bushfires as political heat climbs

Hazardous smoke blankets Sydney, children urged to stay inside

SYDNEY: Firefighters battled hundreds of bushfires across Australia yesterday as scores of blazes sprang up in new locations, triggering warnings that it was too late for some residents to evacuate. As thick smoke blanketed the most populous city of Sydney for a third day, residents were urged to keep children indoors, stepping up pressure on Prime Minister Scott Morrison to tackle climate change. By early afternoon, dozens of fires were burning across the southeastern state of Victoria and temperatures of 40.9 Celsius (105.6 F) in Melbourne, its capital, matched the hottest day on record in 1894, Australia's weather bureau said.

Authorities warned residents of towns about 50 km north of Ballarat, the state's third largest city, that it was too late for them to evacuate safely. "You are in danger, act now to protect yourself," fire authorities said in an alert. "It is too late to leave. The safest option is to take shelter indoors immediately." Blazes across several states have endangered thousands of people, killing at least four people this month, burning about 2.5 million acres of farmland and bush and destroying more than 400 homes.

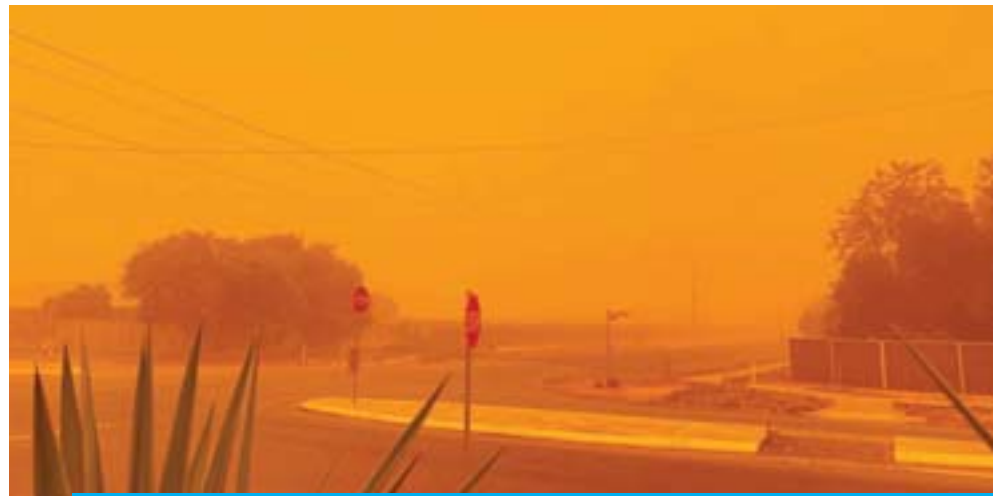
The early arrival and severity of the fires in the southern hemisphere spring follows three years of drought that experts have linked to climate change and which have left bushland tinder-dry. With 10 days remaining to the official

start of summer, extreme temperatures and high winds have sparked wildfires in new areas, even as firefighters tracked the crisis across the mainland, the Northern Territory and the island of Tasmania.

In Victoria, power to more than 100,000 homes was knocked out amid lightning strikes and strong, gusty winds of more than 110 kph (68 mph) that knocked tree branches into power lines, ahead of a cool change expected to bring relief in the evening. The extensive damage was likely to leave some customers without power through the night as utilities worked to restore networks and fix downed powerlines, a spokeswoman for power provider Ausnet said.

State authorities issued its first Code Red alert in a decade, signifying the worst possible bushfire conditions, warning that should a fire start it would be fast moving, unpredictable and probably uncontrollable. In the state of New South Wales, strong winds blew smoke from 60 fires still burning over much of Sydney, shrouding the harbor city and its famous landmarks in thick smog. The state imposed tough new water curbs in Sydney from Dec. 10, when a key dam is expected to be down to 45% capacity. Residents face fines if they use hoses to water their gardens and wash their cars.

The unrelenting conditions have sharpened attention on the climate change policies of Prime



MILDURA: This handout picture taken and released courtesy of Petra Johansson shows the sky turning orange from dust storms caused by bushfires in Mildura in Victoria state.—AFP

Minister Scott Morrison, who rejected any link. "Climate change is a global phenomenon, and we're doing our bit as part of the response to climate change," Morrison told ABC radio. "To suggest that, with just 1.3% of global emissions, that Australia doing something differently - more or less - would have changed the fire outcome

this season, I don't think that stands up to any credible scientific evidence at all." Morrison's conservative government has committed to the Paris Agreement for a cut in emissions from 26% to 28% by 2030, versus 2005 levels. Critics say current projections suggest it will miss that target and have urged remedial steps.—Reuters

Strong quake hits Thai-Lao border

BANGKOK: A shallow 6.1-magnitude earthquake hit northwest Laos near the Thai border yesterday, the United States Geological Survey reported, alarming locals who felt buildings shake as far away as Bangkok. The quake hit at 6:50 am, roughly three hours after a 5.7-magnitude earthquake in the same region triggered an immediate suspension to Laos' largest-capacity power plant located near its epicenter.

Tremors could be felt more than 700 kilometers away in the Thai capital, where Pope Francis is currently on a four-day visit. "The shaking... was the main shock from a quake in Laos at 6:50 am and was felt in northern and northeastern Thailand and Bangkok and suburbs," said Sophon Chaila, an official at the Thai Meteorological Department.

The department said the quake affected nine provinces in Thailand and there were four lesser aftershocks. It also became a top trending topic on Twitter in Thailand, as locals shared videos of swaying overhead lights and rattling window blinds in office buildings. Residents in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi also felt buildings sway. "The ceiling lights were shaking quite strongly. I felt dizzy and scared," said Hanoi resident Tran Hoa Phuong, who felt the earthquake in her 27-storey apartment building.

After the first quake, the 1,878-megawatt Hongsa Power Plant — Laos' largest-capacity thermal energy generator — immediately suspended operations according to a statement from the Thai-owned company. No "fundamental" damages or injuries have been found so far, "merely damages to the external texture of the buildings", it said, adding that Hongsa is expected to take 24 hours to complete its inspection.—AFP

Fearful wait for justice a decade after Philippine's worst political massacre

MANILA: A decade after 58 people were killed in the Philippines' worst political massacre, none of the alleged masterminds have been convicted yet, leaving families fearful that justice may never come. Though a verdict is now due next month over the bloodshed that drew international outrage, there is no guarantee of a conviction and the painfully slow-moving trial could still be derailed by corruption or even violence. "We are afraid for the life of the prosecutor or even our judge," said Mary Grace Morales, whose sister and husband were among 32 journalists killed in the attack, making it one of world's deadliest on media workers.

In the years since leaders of the Ampatuan political dynasty were accused of masterminding the November 23, 2009 massacre, at least four witnesses have been killed before they could testify and death threats have been common. Ampatuan family leaders, who ruled the impoverished southern province of Maguindanao, are charged with organizing the mass killing in a bid to quash an election challenge from a rival clan.

"We are just praying that nothing happens in the next month," added Morales, referring to the verdict that the Supreme Court ordered be delivered by December 20 for some 100 defendants. The trial has moved at a glacial pace, with allegations of bribery and delay tactics against the dynasty's lawyers, which previously included Salvador Panelo, now President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman. However, even routine cases can take years to make it through the Philippine

court system, which is notoriously overburdened, underfunded and vulnerable to pressure from the powerful.

Many people with a vested interest in halting the case remain free. Of the nearly 200 defendants charged, about 80 are still at large, including 14 Ampatuans. "These are dangerous people. They have been involved in many killings," Nena Santos, a lawyer who represents 38 of the victims' families, said referring to the suspects. Santos said she believes the prosecution will secure convictions of at least the main players, but added "of course the final judgment depends on the judge". This case is particularly high-profile as it was carried out in broad daylight on a convoy carrying an Ampatuan family rival's wife, relatives, lawyers and the journalists, who were killed in a hail of gunfire. Word spread quickly and the victims' bodies were found in roadside pits hastily dug with a government-owned excavator. The killing drew international outrage and exposed how then Philippine president Gloria Arroyo had tolerated the Ampatuans' heavily-armed militia as a buffer against Muslim rebels. Experts warn that despite the outrage and politicians' promises of reform, many underlying factors in the slaughter have not been rooted out in the Philippines. The killings would not have been possible without a heavily armed militia, yet the nation's south is still awash in guns after generations of insurgency and weak government control.

Deadly violence between rivals and supporters also remains a fact in the country's elections, where political power is a path to wealth in a nation where millions live in deep poverty. Political power is frequently concentrated in the hands of family dynasties, which get protection from national politicians in need of local votes. "Since the massacre, and the subsequent arrest of some members of the Ampatuan family, the local power dynamics in Maguindanao have changed very little," Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch's deputy Asia director, told AFP.

Though the Ampatuans no longer hold top elected posts in Maguindanao, at least 25 of them won local seats in May's elections, results show. Sajid Ampatuan, who is charged with murder over the massacre and spent five years in a Manila jail while on trial, has been elected mayor twice since being released on bail.—AFP

Lifestyle

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Ricci during
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Breakout star Lizzo
tops fledgling field
at Grammy noms

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Camel herding in W Sahara
a passion with pedigree

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British singer and television personality Stacey Solomon



British singer Lily Allen, center, and daughters Marnie Rose Cooper and Ethel Cooper pose on the red carpet as they arrive to attend the European premiere of the film 'Frozen 2' in London.—AFP photos

Anna and Elsa face risky journey in 'Frozen 2'

In the sequel to Walt Disney Co's 2013 hit animated musical "Frozen," sisters Anna and Elsa find themselves drawn far outside their icy kingdom of Arendelle.

"Frozen 2," which debuts in theaters today, sees the sisters embark on an "epic, dangerous adventure" into an enchanted forest, said star Kristen Bell, who voices younger sister Anna. Along the way, the pair discover new information about their family "that doesn't sit well," Bell said.

The journey begins when Queen Elsa, voiced by Idina Menzel, hears someone calling her and feels pulled into the forest in search of answers about her past. "The first film looked at love versus fear in dealing with being different," said writer and co-director Jennifer Lee. "This looks at the power of love over fear as you navigate through change, and I think the message of perseverance is at the core of it."

"Frozen 2" features seven new songs that the filmmakers hope will captivate viewers much like the anthem "Let It Go" from the original movie. One of the new songs sung by Menzel, called "Into the Unknown," signifies the "danger and risk which is what is calling to Elsa," said Robert Lopez, who co-wrote the songs with his wife, Kristen Anderson-Lopez. "She needs to find her purpose," Lopez said of Elsa. "She needs to take this dangerous journey to get there, and it's going to threaten everything. She has to do it for her kingdom and for herself."—Reuters



(Left to right) US film director Chris Buck, US film director Jennifer Lee and US film producer Peter Del Vecho

Lifestyle |



British television personality Kimberley Garner



British model and television presenter Holly Willoughby



US actor Josh Gad



US actor Idina Menzel



British DJ and television presenter Edith Bowman



British model and socialite Tamara Ecclestone and her daughter Sophia Ecclestone-Rutland

Hollywood group launches largest-ever survey on sexual harassment

Two years after the #MeToo scandal first roiled Hollywood, causing dozens of powerful men to lose their jobs, a new group on Wednesday launched what it said was the largest-ever industry-wide survey aimed at countering sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry. The Hollywood Commission on Eliminating Sexual Harassment and Advancing Equality said the survey was open to anyone who "has worked or tried to work in any area of entertainment."

The commission is chaired by Anita Hill, the law professor who became an icon for the movement against sexual harass-

ment when she accused nominated Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in 1991. Thomas denied her accusations. The survey, which will be completed anonymously and online, will be used to develop policies to counter workplace harassment and bias, the commission said. A summary of findings will be released in early 2020.

"What we need to get our arms around, if we're going to come up with effective solutions, is reliable data that reveals the specific nature and actual extent of those problems as well as the cultural environment that enables and hides them," Hill said

in a statement. Several Hollywood labor unions and the Academy of Motion Pictures, which organizes the Oscars, have already come up with guidelines aimed at tackling sexual misconduct.

These include hotlines for complaints, restrictions on holding meetings and auditions in hotels and private offices, and encouraging people to report harassment. The Hollywood Commission, whose members include film and TV studios and talent agencies, said its survey would be open to everyone from actors and dancers to wardrobe stylists and PR agencies, making it "the largest attempt at gathering this essential data."

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Gayle King attends the GRAMMY Nominations Press Conference at CBS Studios in New York City.



Alicia Keys, right, and Bebe Rexha — AFP photos



In this file photo US singer-songwriter Billie Eilish performs at the Austin City Limits (ACL) Music Festival at Zilker Park in Austin, Texas.



Recording Academy president and CEO Deborah Dugan

Breakout star *Lizzo* tops fledgling field at Grammy noms

Singer and rapper Lizzo scored eight Grammy nominations Wednesday to lead a field packed with newcomers, including pop iconoclast Billie Eilish and overnight sensation Lil Nas X, for music's biggest honors. The diverse slate of budding talent appeared to reflect the Recording Academy's recent efforts to appease critics who have lambasted the show as too white, too male and too generous to music world mainstays.

Magnetic 31-year-old Lizzo debuted in 2013 but really burst into the public eye with her third studio album "Cuz I Love You," which scored a nomination for the top Album of the Year prize at the January 26 ceremony in Los Angeles. The classically-trained flutist was nominated in all four of the top categories. She has an adoring fanbase that favors her sassy, body-positive persona and unflinching messages of feminist empowerment, sexual freedom and black pride.

"THIS HAS BEEN AN INCREDIBLE YEAR FOR MUSIC AND IM JUST SO THANKFUL TO EVEN BE PART OF IT," the artist tweeted upon learning of her nominations. Eilish also nabbed a shot at best album for "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" to bring her career nomination count to six-and, at 17, became the youngest person nominated in the top four categories. Before her album's release, the goth-leaning artist had already won a fervent online following for her bold, often haunting pop sound featuring heavy bass and tinges of trap and electronic dance music.

Her brother and main collaborator

Finneas O'Connell, 22, is up for five awards for producing and songwriting contributions. Saying he was "grateful" for the industry recognition, O'Connell tweeted that "most of all, I'm just grateful to billie for making music with her big brother."

Genre-bending meme king Lil Nas X, 20, rode the fame of his viral smash "Old Town Road" to also snag six chances at Grammy gold. After grabbing attention on the video-sharing app TikTok, the artist born Montero Lamar Hill won the internet when the thumping bass and banjo twangs of his infectious single knocked Ariana Grande from the Billboard chart's top spot-and stayed there for a record-breaking 19 weeks.

Swift snub

The newcomers will square up against some established superstars. Grande—whose album "thank u, next" missed last year's Grammy deadline—bagged five nominations for 2020. The 26-year-old won her first Grammy last year, but notably skipped the party: just days before the event, she roasted the ceremony's producer for "lying" about her decision not to perform. On Wednesday she said this year's "acknowledgement is truly enough on its own for me and my heart."

Beyoncé earned four nods on the strength of her Netflix concert film about her dazzling 2018 Coachella performance and the album accompanying this year's "Lion King" film remake. The enigmatic R&B prodigy H.E.R., who won two Grammys last year, also got five nominations,

including for Album of the Year. Once an Academy darling with 10 Grammys to her name, Taylor Swift was, like last year, largely snubbed from the major categories for her album "Lover," except for Song of the Year for her title track. She is up for just three awards, the two others in the pop categories.

Nipsey noms

Last year, the Recording Academy expanded the four major categories from five nominees to eight, a bid to diversify and respond to critics bemoaning the underrepresentation of women. The top categories also include veteran alt-leaning acts like Lana Del Rey, Bon Iver and Vampire Weekend. The Best Rap Album category features Meek Mill and 21 Savage, both of whom faced legal battles that drew critiques that the artists were targeted over race.

The late rapper Nipsey Hussle—who was shot dead earlier this year at age 33—received three posthumous nominations, having lost the 2019 prize for Best Rap Album to Cardi B. Irish band The Cranberries were shortlisted for Best Rock Album, having released their final album "In The End" a year after lead singer Dolores O'Riordan was found dead. — AFP

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Openly gay Lil Nas X makes Grammy history with nominations

Country rapper Lil Nas X on Wednesday became the first openly gay rap artist to be nominated in top categories at the Grammy Awards, the highest honors in the music industry. The 20-year-old rapper, who came out as gay in June, scored nods in the biggest awards categories: album and record of the year, as well as best new artist. Lil Nas X has already made music history this year, becoming the first openly gay man to receive a Country Music Association award in a genre known for its conservatism.

Born Montero Lamar Hill, the rap star divulged his sexuality on social media in Pride month, becoming the first musical artist across genres to come out as gay

while at No. 1. Lil Nas X later said he had feared a backlash, particularly given his country-music fan base. "I know the people who listen to this the most, and they're not accepting of homosexuality," he told TIME magazine.

While an increasing number of stars have come out in recent years, country music is often associated with Christianity and conservative views on gender roles and sexuality. In total, Lil Nas X received six nominations, tied with singer Billie Eilish and just behind rapper Lizzo, who led the field with eight nominations. In 2015, openly gay British singer Sam Smith became the first out artist to win a Grammy for best pop vocal album.

US rapper Frank Ocean, who says he has dated men and women, was nominated for best new album, record of the year and best new artist in 2013. The Grammy Awards will be handed out in Los Angeles on Jan. 26 in a ceremony hosted by Alicia Keys. — Reuters

In this file photo US rapper Lil Nas X poses with the Song of the Year Award in the press room during the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. — AFP



Pop star Lizzo: America's spicy poster girl of self-love

Not that long ago, Lizzo was on the verge of quitting music, dispirited by the lack of recognition she was getting for her unique pop-rap blend sprinkled with classical flute riffs. But it's now difficult to envision the music world without her effervescent stage presence.

Lizzo is dominating the concert scene, streaming playlists and social media feeds, seducing legions of fervent fans with her soulful self-love anthems, zesty raps and even the occasional twerk. She capped a banner year—which included her album drop, topping the hot songs chart and a cameo in the hit film "Hustlers"—by jumping ahead of this year's Grammy pack on Wednesday to lead the field with eight nominations, including nods in all four major categories.

Boost from Prince

The 31-year-old artist born Melissa Viviane Jefferson debuted in 2013 but did not achieve mainstream success until the release of her third studio album "Cuz I Love You," which is in the running for Album of the Year Grammy honors. The Detroit-born, Houston-raised performer with a big voice developed a hankering for hip-hop as a pre-teen but originally aspired to a career as a professional flutist.

She relocated to Minneapolis in 2011 — an ultimately career-changing move that led her to encounter the Midwest's favorite son Prince, who co-signed her to work with him. "When you're an artist, your career isn't defined by trends or age," she told Rolling Stone of working with the late legend who changed the course of pop. "That's the biggest lesson I learned from Prince:

perpetuate positivity, and also art is forever. Be eternal."

'Everybody has different packaging'

Lizzo's perseverance to reach the top has included letting herself get vulnerable on body image. Her music celebrates her blackness and size with unfettered determination, including lyrics like "I'm just as thick as my skin is" and "No, I'm not a snack at all / Look, baby, I'm the whole damn meal." "I got backfat and I got a belly," the superstar told Rolling Stone in 2018. "Everybody looks different. Everybody has different packaging," she added.

"I do this... so little girls in the future don't have to worry about this body shaming. This body shaming in the mass media is holding us back, but it ain't holding me back." She penned her song "My Skin" after being asked to name her favorite physical characteristic and realized her skin, which she had just scraped in an incident, stood out. "That was the first time I'd ever discovered my body love," she told NPR. "I wrote this song to celebrate that moment because it literally changed my life," she said, noting that as a black woman, "the thing that I like about myself the most is the thing that's weaponized against us."

Truth Hurts

The uninhibited artist shut down this year's Black Entertainment Television awards with a viral performance of her sleeper smash "Truth Hurts." "Why men great 'til they gotta be great?" rapped Lizzo, sporting a lacy bridal corset, sneakers and bling, bringing the crowd to its feet including an exuberant Rihanna, who has praised the breakout

artist as "so badass."

"You're s'posed to hold me down, but you're holding me back / And that's the sound of me not calling you back," Lizzo emphatically sings in the infectious hit originally released in 2017, which soared to the top of the US songs chart when it was re-issued on a deluxe version of her latest album. Lizzo's rise to celebrity has not been without industry drama, as a legal dispute concerning songwriting credits brews over "Truth Hurts." Two brothers, who Lizzo has sued, hold they were key to an early songwriting session that developed the hit's signature line: "I just took a DNA test, turns out I'm 100 percent that b****."

Music goddess

The Grammy Awards-music's biggest night on January 26 — could see a rager of a performance from Lizzo, who routinely slings back tequila from the bottle onstage. Fashion watchers will also be on red alert for the boisterous star's latest ensemble—she donned a fluffy, hot pink Marc Jacobs jacket to this year's Met Gala, which she proudly wore as she strutted through a New York airport the morning after. But no matter the gown, there's no doubt Lizzo will be unabashedly herself.

"I didn't have enough women to look up to and they weren't given enough space in the industry to carve out a lane for big girls that are brown and black and want to sing and dance without getting... body shamed," she told Vogue in May. "I want to be a music goddess and I'm out here trying to make that happen for myself." — AFP

In this file photo US singer Lizzo performs on stage during the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.





Models pose prior to the presentation of Italy's iconic Florence-based fashion house Stefano Ricci's preview of its Fall/Winter 2021 collection at Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice, Northern Italy. — AFP photos



Wet catwalk for **Stefano Ricci** during Venice floods



Italian designer Stefano Ricci's latest silk tuxedos may be sharply tailored, but they are not ideal wear for the exceptional flood that swept through Venice as they were unveiled. "For our next collection, remind me to include rain boots," quipped creative director Filippo Ricci as he presented his father's Fall/Winter 2021-21 collection as a record high tide left the heart of the UNESCO city underwater last week.

The Florence-based menswear and accessories brand, which has outfitted celebrities from Andrea Bocelli to Morgan Freeman and Tom Cruise, showed off its new look at the



Stefano Ricci, founder and owner of Italy's iconic Florence-based fashion house

prestigious Scuola Grande di San Rocco. The Scuola's headquarters boasts the biggest collection of paintings in the world by 16th century master Tintoretto.

As models showed off the collection against a backdrop of tempestuous Old Testament scenes painted in oil, canals outside burst their banks, flooding Saint Mark's Square and Basilica, and numerous other churches and historic buildings. The fashion house's waterproof cashmere coats with mink lining may have kept those in the storm dry, but the wearer would have needed waders in any case—perhaps in the brand's trademark nubuck crocodile.

Outshining the Sun

Luxury label Stefano Ricci, which trains young artisans, picked the historic venue because its confraternity served as a patron of artists and artisans in its heyday. "This was known as a place where they were protecting and improving arts and craftsmanship," CEO Niccolo Ricci told AFP. The family brand, founded in 1972, is invested in "training people





in the art of beauty, (crafts that) use your hands," he said.

Youngsters are paired with master artisans who have more than 20 years of experience in tailoring, jewelry or leather. Tintoretto was placed with just such a master by his father, but legend has it painter Titian-known by his contemporaries as "The Sun Amidst Small Stars"-was afraid the youngster would outshine him, and so kicked him out.

Tintoretto would go on to win the commission to decorate the headquarters of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, which is dedicated to Saint Roch, invoked down the centuries by Catholics seeking protection from the plague. "The confraternity was founded in around 1470 by a group of people who wanted to pray against the plague epidemics that often afflicted port cities like Venice," said Demetrio Sonaglioni, the Scuola's vice-president. "They managed to get the saint's body from Voghera (in northern Italy); whether they stole it or paid for it is unclear," he said.

Plague of snakes

It was one of several so-called "flagellant" confraternities, whose members mortified their own flesh by whipping it. While that practice died out, board members still wear the traditional white robe and face-covering hood with eyeholes cut out to ceremonies. "Many came to pray to Saint Roch, many made donations, and the school became rich," Sonaglioni said, adding that the board was made up of well-off merchants, particularly from the fabrics trade.

Tintoretto was painting a scene from the Old Testament about a plague of snakes sent by God when the deadly disease struck once more, killing a quarter of the city and at least 100 of the confraternity's members. His survival



strengthened his faith, as can be seen in the over 60 religious depictions that adorn the walls and ceilings, including several of Saint Roch—who is also the patron saint of bachelors.

The blueberry blues and cabernet reds in the Stefano Ricci collection echo those in Tintoretto's scenes. Bachelors donning the brand's field jackets or fox fur collars are advised to steer clear of snakes, and, in particular, floods. — AFP



Niccolo Ricci, CEO of Italy's iconic Florence-based fashion house Stefano Ricci

Vogue cover spotlights Mexico's transgender 'muxe' women

A culture of indigenous transgender women that has been part of southern Mexico's heritage for centuries is primed for global fashion cachet thanks to one of the world's top style magazines. For the first time in Vogue magazine's more than 120 years of publishing, an indigenous "muxe" will appear next month on the cover of the glossy's Mexican and British editions. Muxes, a term probably derived from the Spanish word *mujer* meaning woman, are indigenous transgender

women who easily mix gay male and feminine identities.

The cover photo features Estrella Vazquez, a tall, lanky 37-year-old indigenous Zapotec muxe wearing a traditional huipil garment with colorful flowers and holding a pink fan in one hand. The weaver and designer sees the cover as a sign of receding bigotry in Mexico toward muxes. Historically the country's ingrained Roman Catholic heritage has reinforced anti-gay and anti-transgender prejudice. "I think it's a huge step," Vazquez told Reuters in Juchitan city in southern Oaxaca state, home to perhaps the largest muxe (pronounced MOO-she) community. "There's still discrimination, but it's not as much now and you don't see it like you once did," she said.

While muxes are not well known outside Mexico, within the country it is not uncommon to see muxes at gay pride parades or other cultural events. No statistics are collected, but the muxe community is thought to number in the hundreds or thousands. In August, Vazquez, who had never heard of Vogue, was invited

along with a dozen other muxes by the magazine to participate in a photo shoot. Vogue wanted to highlight Oaxaca's indigenous cultures, she said.

"Everyone is seeing this cover, everyone is congratulating me. I don't know; it's just hard to make sense of the emotions I'm feeling. It almost makes me want to cry," she said. Many muxes historically have been caregivers to aging parents, a role that has given them prestige in families which typically are shaped by Mexico's macho, male-dominated culture.

Muxes also played a leading role in the aftermath of a massive 8.1 magnitude earthquake that struck Juchitan in 2017, as many worked to dig out trapped family and friends from the rubble, often using their bare hands. Vogue, owned by New York-based Conde Nast, publishes more than 20 editions of the magazine around the world with circulation of 24.4 million. — Reuters



Camel herding in W Sahara a passion with pedigree

In the Oued Eddahab desert in Western Sahara, Habiboullah Dlimi raises dairy and racing camels just like his ancestors used to—but with a little help from modern technology. His animals roam free in the desert and are milked as camels always have been, by hand, at dawn and dusk. When camels “feed on wild plants and walk all day, the milk is much better,” said the 59-year-old herder, rhapsodizing about the bene-

fits of the nutrient-rich drink, known as the “source of life” for nomads. But Dlimi no longer lives with his flock. He lives in town with his family. His camels are watched over by hired herders and Dlimi follows GPS coordinates across the desert in a 4X4 vehicle to reach them. He is reticent when asked about the size of his herd. “That would bring bad luck,” he said. He prefers to speak of the gentleness and friendliness of

the animals he knows like his own children. “Camels can endure everything: sun, wind, sand and lack of water, and if they could talk, you’d easily hear how intelligent they are,” he said.

Tribes are tribes

Dlimi comes from a long line of desert dwellers from the Ouled Dlimi tribe. As tradition dictates, he lists his ancestors going back five generations when introducing himself. “I know the desert and the desert knows me,” he said. Like elsewhere, the nomads of Western Sahara are settling, following a shift from rural to urban living. “Young people prefer to stay in town,” Dlimi said, and herders now mostly come from neighboring Mauritania, whose desert north is traversed by caravans of up to a thousand camels.

Even they “often demand to work in areas covered by (mobile phone) network signal,” he added. The population of the nearby town of Dakhla has tripled to 100,000 in 20 years, with growth driven by fishing, tourism and greenhouse farming encouraged by Morocco. In this part of Western Sahara, development projects depend entirely on Rabat.

Morocco has controlled 80 percent of the former Spanish colony since the 1970s and wants to maintain it as an autonomous territory under its sovereignty. The Polisario Front movement fought a war for independence from 1975 to 1991 and wants a referendum in which the people of Western Sahara choose between independence and integration with Morocco.

The United Nations has been trying to negotiate a political compromise for decades. Like many in his tribe, Dlimi has family members on the other side of



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Saharawi camel owner Habiboullah Dlimi poses with one of his animals in the desert near Dakhla in Morocco-administered Western Sahara.—AFP photos



Camel herders tend to their animals in the desert near Dakhla in Morocco-administered Western Sahara.

the Western Sahara Wall separating the Moroccan controlled areas from the Polisario controlled areas. He favors loyalty to Morocco while others back independence, he said. Tribal affiliation trumps politics, though. “Tribes are tribes, it’s a social organization,” he said. “There are very strong links between us.” To “preserve the past for the future,” Dlimi started a cultural association to conserve traditions from a time when there were no borders and “families followed the herds and the clouds”.

Eight-time champion

While Dlimi loves the desert, he does have one complaint: “The camel dairy industry is valued everywhere in the world except here.” Camel milk is trendy with health-conscious con-

sumers and the lean meat is excellent, Dlimi claims. Today though, it is small livestock farming that is the main agricultural focus, in response to what non-nomadic Moroccans tend to eat. The 266,000 square kilometers of Western Sahara under Moroccan control hosts some 6,000 herders, 105,000 camels, and 560,000 sheep and goats, according to figures from Rabat. In other arid countries, including Saudi Arabia, intensive farming of camels has taken off. But, while Moroccan authorities have undertaken several studies into developing Western Sahara’s camel industry, these have not so far been acted upon. Regardless, a local adage holds that he who has no camel, has nothing. “Some say that Saharans are crazy because when they have money they spend it on four feet,” Dlimi jokes. For him, 20,000 dirhams spent on a camel is a safe in-

vestment. But it is also a consuming passion. His Facebook page and WhatsApp messages are filled with talk of camel husbandry techniques, research and racing.

Racing “is a pleasure and it pays”, Dlimi said. Since the United Arab Emirates funded construction of a camel racing track at Tantan, 900 kilometers to the north, racing animals have appreciated in value and can sell for up to 120,000 dirhams, according to Dlimi.

To train his racing camels, Dlimi chases the young animals across the desert in his 4X4. The technique has made him an eight-time champion in national competitions, he said. But camels can be stubborn, Dlimi stressed, telling of how he once sold his best champion for a “very good price”, but the animal refused to race once it had changed hands.—AFP



What a relief! Paris show lifts taboo on historic outdoor loos



They were as much a symbol of Paris as croissants and the Eiffel Tower, though they had more than a whiff of scandal from the start. Now the much-mourned “pissotieres”, the dark-green public urinals that gave relief to generations of Parisian men, are finally getting their place in the city’s social and architectural history. The first-ever exhibition in the French capital dedicated to the once ubiquitous and notorious facilities opened on Wednesday.

But the metropolis which invented the on-street urinal had an ambivalent attitude towards them from the unbuttoning of the first fly, curator Marc Martin told AFP. The one-man originals—with a rather phallic peppermill design—were quickly christened “Rambuteau’s columns” after the aristocratic city official who commissioned them in 1834. Scandalised at the double entendre, “Monsieur Clean”, as he was nicknamed, tried to give the urinals a grander air by calling them “vespasiennes” after the Roman emperor Vespasian who once taxed urine—which the ancients use to bleach their togas.

But the pissotieres’ success quickly spawned three-, six- and eight-man versions—and that is when the fun began, laughed Martin, an artist and photographer who is a specialist on forgotten urban underworlds. “They rapidly became places for hookups that would be impossible anywhere else. Generations of (gay) men were emancipated in them,” he said.

Spies and subterfuge

But beyond the gay world, they also played a pivotal role in French history as a place of secrets and subterfuge, used by spies to make drops and by Resistance fighters to pass messages and weapons out of sight from the Nazi occupiers during World War II. Some of the disinformation that fuelled the anti-Semitic Dreyfus Affair, which rocked France at the turn of the 20th century, was spread through the pissotieres, Martin found through a decade of research.

But it was their reputation for illicit encounters that piqued the interest and the pens of writers from Verlaine and Rimbaud to Celine. Some scholars even believe Proust may have enjoyed pongy pleasures in their stalls. Martin said they were “an incredible vector in social and sexual mixing”, particularly the three-man version, where the man in “the highly strategic middle stall was usually there to do everything but go to the toilet”.

Martin said his own fascination with them—he has also written an acclaimed book on the subject—began because he

had the “first sensations” about his own sexuality “just as they were being closed down” in the early 1980s.

Like smell, scandal lingers

Only one remains in Paris, just outside the walls of the Sante prison, an unconscious symbolic warning, Martin insisted, “of where your behavior might land you”. Like their ripe smell, the taboo lingers, with all of the city’s major museums holding their noses at the idea of staging the show, which has found a home at the Point Ephemere arts space by the trendy Canal St Martin.

The show will travel to New York’s Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art next year after already having an extended run at the Schwules Museum in Berlin. “It’s a shame to sweep this little human story under the carpet,” Martin said. Despite endless campaigns for their closure on grounds of “social hygiene”, pissotieres were a potent if smelly symbol of the City of Lights, he said. Hollywood legend Alfred Hitchcock—whose “Psycho” offered the first footage of a flushing toilet in a mainstream Hollywood film—was a fan, insisting on meeting journalists at one for his interviews during a 1969 Paris visit. The exhibition also includes touching testimony from the urinals’ former users, including one old man who admits for the first time that he met his life’s partner in one.

‘Such an adventure!’

Another, 73-year-old Jean-Pierre, was positively misty-eyed about them. “I was touched up by dancers, fashion designers, actors and singers in them... You could meet someone in a smelly urinal and a few minutes later be in their sumptuous apartment. It was such an adventure!” An attempt last year to revive “pissotiers” on the streets of Paris to stop men from urinating against walls—a perennial problem—was quashed by feminists who argued they were sexist because none were adapted for women. “It was ever so, said Martin, who said women have been “long forgotten” in the history of public lavatories. In keeping with pissotiere tradition, and Paris city hall’s policy of free public toilets, the exhibition is open to all. You don’t have to spend a penny, joked Martin: “We could not have had it any other way.”—AFP

Elton John: I needed teleprompter for Princess Diana’s funeral song

British singer-songwriter Elton John said he was so worried about getting the words wrong when performing an adaptation of “Candle In the Wind” at Princess Diana’s funeral that he had a teleprompter installed by the piano. John, who was a friend of Diana, sang the new version of the hit song using revised words penned by lyricist and frequent collaborator Bernie Taupin.

His performance at London’s Westminster Abbey in 1997, after Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris, was a standout moment at a televised service watched by hundreds of millions of people around the world. The song, featuring the line “Goodbye England’s rose” instead of the original words “Goodbye Norma Jean”, went on to become the fastest-selling single in Britain.

“It’s the first time I had a teleprompter, a teleprompter down on my left hand side, because I thought if I sing ‘Goodbye Norma Jean’ I’m gonna get hung, drawn and quartered,” John told a London audience late on Tuesday. “So just for precaution, I had the teleprompter there.” The 72-year-old was speaking at the Royal Academy of Music, where he once studied, at an event to mark the publication of his autobiography “Me: Elton John”.

He described the process by which he and Taupin worked together on some of their greatest hits. “He (Bernie) always gives me a lyric,” John said. “I go into a room, put the lyric on the piano, look at the title. And as I start reading the song, a little movie comes in my head a bit like writing a film score where you get the visual part. “By the time I finish the song or the lyric, I kind of know what tempo it might be or what genre it could be. And I just literally put my hands on the piano and that’s it. I hope for the best. That is it.”—Reuters

Britain's art world turns its back on oil cash

Oil companies are becoming increasingly unfashionable partners for British cultural institutions, as they ditch corporate sponsorship under pressure from artists and environmentalists. Members of the "BP or not BP?" protest group on Tuesday disrupted an event for the British Museum's new exhibition on Troy, which is sponsored by the British oil giant. Activists dressed as Greek gods and heroes such as Zeus, Athena and Achilles, were sprayed with a black liquid by "Petroleum"—a deity created especially for the occasion. "BP's sponsorship of the British Museum is, ironically, just like the famous Trojan Horse highlighted in the exhibition," said activist Sophie McIntosh. "The company sponsors the museum in order to look like a generous gift-giver that cares about culture but, in reality, it's a cynical attempt to deflect attention from something far more sinister."

A spokeswoman for the museum told AFP she "understands" the concerns. But temporary exhibitions such as the Troy show were "expensive to stage, and only possible to plan, develop and host with this kind of external support", she said. The activists, who say they have already held 37 protests at the British Museum, are in no mood to back down. Now they plan to build a Trojan horse and lay siege to the venue.

Climate emergency

The activists have already forced some institutions to back

down and left others wondering about whether to persist in corporate sponsorship from oil firms. The prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company, based in the playwright's hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon in central England, announced in October that it was cutting its ties with BP. BP said it was "disappointed and dismayed" by the decision, pointing out its sponsorship enabled the theatre company to offer cheap tickets for young people.

But it was a letter from a youth group behind school protests that tipped the balance. "Amidst the climate emergency, which we recognize, young people are now saying clearly to us that the BP sponsorship is putting a barrier between them and their wish to engage with the RSC," the institution's management explained. "We cannot ignore that message."

Campaigners "BP or not BP?"—their name is a play on the famous soliloquy in Shakespeare's "Hamlet"—have been pushing against oil money in the arts for years. "This year has been the year where it all came to fruition," one of its members, Danny Chivers, told AFP. "Partly because of movements like the school strikes and Extinction Rebellion," which organized a series of disruptive protests to highlight the urgent need to fight climate change. Also, "a lot of people inside the art world have been speaking out more and more loudly," he said, citing leading actor Mark Rylance, who quit the RSC because of

BP's involvement. National Galleries Scotland followed suit earlier this month. "We recognize that we have a responsibility to do all we can to address the climate emergency," it said, explaining its decision.

Liberate the Louvre

Activists have promised there will be no let-up. Now they intend to target the Royal Opera House and the National Portrait Gallery both of which still receive sponsorship from BP. A spokeswoman for the central London gallery told AFP it was "listening carefully to voices on all sides". In France meanwhile, activists calling themselves "Liberate the Louvre" have mobilized against oil giant Total, performing theatrical events protesting its sponsorship of the museum. It is not just oil companies who are feeling the heat.

Money from the Sackler family, which built its fortune on the powerful painkiller accused of fuelling the US opiate crisis, is now being ignored by some of the world's greatest museums. It remains to be seen how institutions will plug the funding gap. But Chivers said London's Tate, and the Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland both gave up taking oil money in 2016 and "seem to be going just fine".—AFP



Gallerists hang giant photos by photographer Frank Thiel of the Allied soldiers who once patrolled Berlin that have been displayed at Checkpoint Charlie are up for auction in Berlin.—AFP photos

Checkpoint Charlie soldier photos to be auctioned

Giant photos of the Allied soldiers who once patrolled Berlin that have been displayed at Checkpoint Charlie for years are being sold off by a German auction house next week. The pictures were taken by photographer Frank Thiel in 1994, several years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and before British, French, Russian and US forces that had been stationed in Berlin since World War II were re-deployed.

They were installed at Checkpoint Charlie, a crossing point between East and West Berlin where soldiers from the rival sides

in the Cold War would have stood. It was the site of one of the tensest moments of the Cold War, when US and Soviet tanks faced off in 1961. The photos—stark individual portraits of young soldiers—have themselves become a Berlin landmark.

Stefan Koerner, art expert at the Grisebach auction house that is selling the photos, said the images were "iconic" and could be popular with collectors or museums. "It is a special joy to be showing this work on the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall," he told AFP on Wednesday. The 12 works, which in-

clude images of Russian soldiers still wearing Soviet uniforms, are being auctioned with a starting price of 90,000 euros. Germany celebrated the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9. Ahead of the celebrations, Berlin authorities banned actors who stand at Checkpoint Charlie in military uniforms pretending to be soldiers for tourists. The ban came after plainclothes police found that tourists were being pressured to offer a "donation". Thiel's photos will remain as a visual reminder of the Cold War history of the once-divided city.—AFP



A practical guide to trekking California's John Muir Trail

You rub your eyes to make sure it's real - a 360-degree view from atop the highest peak in the continental US across a sea of granite and snowcapped peaks. Short of breath and legs tingling from the climb, you see creeks flowing from mountain-tops down to alpine lakes, with the trail you just hiked meandering its way through it all. Nothing out there is quite like the John Muir Trail. What does it take to follow in the footsteps of the legendary explorer, naturalist and author the trail is named after? A sense of wonder - and drive.

Overview

The John Muir Trail (originally called Nuumu Poyo by the Paiute tribe) is a 211-mile trek through the heart of the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California, traversing three national parks and exceeding altitudes of 14,000 feet. Hikers follow creeks, climb up and over passes more than two miles high, and carve a path that meanders wonderfully in sync with the surrounding natural beauty. Whether you starting at the northern terminus of Yosemite National Park, or in the south at the Mt. Whitney Portal, this backpacking trip will test your lung capacity and your neck muscles, as you'll constantly be gazing upward at the granite spires. From creek crossings to crampons, mosquito bites to bear canisters, here are some basic tips, tricks and insider secrets for anyone who wishes to commune with nature and scribble in their journal like the legend himself.

What To Expect

Don't plan to be alone on this trail. Whether you decide to hike it



solo or with a group, you aren't the only hiker who dreamed of backpacking the JMT. It is so popular you must go through a lottery to score the permit required to hike the trail, which helps cut down on the crowding and preserves the environment.

Terrain: Depending on the previous winter's snowfall, you could be hiking on bare granite or your entire hike will require crampons and an ice axe. Be prepared to go from 7,000 feet to over 10,000 daily - possibly twice a day. With creek crossings, rock hopping, and constant switch-backs, the only thing the trail isn't is flat.

Weather: Thunder and lightning threaten almost every afternoon. From 3 to 6 pm, it is highly advisable to stay at lower elevations if possible. Even if the weather forecast calls for clear skies, this range makes its own weather. There is also a saying: "There are two seasons - winter and July." In other words, snow can happen any day of the year. An average winter will lay permanent snow on every pass.

Accommodation: Where you sleep depends on what you brought with you. A tent, sleeping pad and sleeping bag are all musts for comfort and safety. There are a couple of permanent accommodations including the John Muir Lodge, Vermillion Valley Resort, and a few relatively nearby towns. Most hikers get off the trail occasionally to re-supply and enjoy the amenities of a hotel or other lodging.

Gear: A several-liter backpack, warm and lightweight sleeping bag, sleeping pad, three-season tent, and water purifier are the basic piece of outdoor gear you need for survival. Rain gear, down jacket, base layers, bug spray, camp stove, hat, sunglasses, sun screen, trekking poles, extra socks, trail shoes, bear canister (to protect your food), and a camera are all necessary. Do your best to pack as light as possible - the heavier your pack, the slower you'll go.

Provisions: You can carry enough food for the length of your hike, but it will be heavy. You can get into nearby towns to re-supply at grocery stores and spoil yourself with town food, or send yourself food packages to the post offices at the lodges and general stores along the way. While it's common practice in the region around the trail, hitchhiking to resupply is never entirely safe and we don't recommend it. Travelers who hitch should understand they are taking a small, but potentially serious, risk.

—www.lonelyplanet.com



Comic

Word Search

Old TV Shows 4

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

F A L L G U Y T I C N I P S L A R T
 I N P E R R Y M A S O N A T A D O N
 T E L O U G R A N T B G A D L O L U
 L M B A N A C E K A E L E E L H O H
 L A R A M I E H Y V I H K A Y R C A
 O Y U G E S I W I E C C O R M K G E
 S T Y L I M A F N C O U S J C T N S
 T R P E Y T O N P L A C E O B S I S
 I A E E C O A D T S C G R H E E V E
 N H L H N T A A E H H E O N A N I G
 S O L T I D M I I E L H E H L Y L D
 P T E O R L K N R G Z O R R O T N I
 A T N O E O A E G F T R O O P P I R
 C R J Z O B S A M O S S O L B M E B
 E A A R E L R Y T I C I L E F E P H
 M H E A U F R A I D U E S O U T H S
 R H C C I E E R E D E V L E B R M A
 T H Y E P O H S N A Y R M A R T I N

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ALIEN NATION | DUE SOUTH | HERE'S LUCY | PERRY MASON |
| ALLY MCBEAL | ELLEN | IN LIVING COLOR | PEYTON PLACE |
| AMEN | EMPTY NEST | LARAMIE | RHODA |
| BANACEK | F TROOP | LOST IN SPACE | RYAN'S HOPE |
| BAYWATCH | FALL GUY | LOU GRANT | SEA HUNT |
| BLOSSOM | FAMILY | MAJOR DAD | SPIN CITY |
| CHICAGO HOPE | FELICITY | MARTIN | THE ROOKIES |
| CHINA BEACH | FRAGGLE ROCK | MATLOCK | VEGAS |
| COACH | HART TO HART | MR BELVEDERE | WISEGUY |
| DEAR JOHN | HAZEL | NASH BRIDGES | ZORRO |

Yesterday's Solution

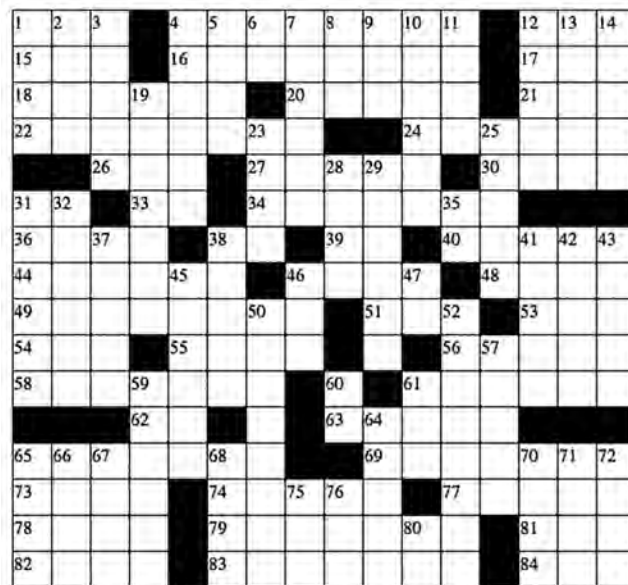
Old TV Shows 3

T N I A S E H T I P R E T E N D E R Q
 E O Y R R A H R E D N A L H G T H R U
 N B C C E G O L D E N G I R L S O H A
 G E N H G E B L S E E K N O M C I G N
 A W I A N X M F E A H B A N K D N T T
 R I U R A F U I M C V F A F E I M G U
 D T Q L R I L W A T A E O T D S A E M
 Y C S I E L O O O M L R N N M S S T L
 R H X E N E C H I N D O A G K R A H S E
 E E I S O S N L C F D L V A E A N M A
 L D N A L R Y N I N S E E E P R K A P
 L M N N K T E L A T U P R P L E S R T P
 A C A G I U E H O E N B Y Y R U L T M
 G C M E O S N N S I S D Y T E L C S M
 T L S L F G K G W N A O R D I A G Y U
 H O R S I Z Z T F Y A A R B A N R L N
 G U N S M O K E S U T G Y Y I R A S G
 I D D W O H S Y B S O C O W A M B S A
 N Y L I M A F S M A D D A H O T E L M

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ADDAMS FAMILY | FAMILY TIES | KNOTS LANDING | QUANTUM LEAP |
| AVENGERS | GET SMART | KUNG FU | QUINCY |
| BATMAN | GOLDEN GIRLS | LONE RANGER | ROCKFORD FILES |
| BEWITCHED | GUNSMOKE | MAGNUM P.I. | ROSEANNE |
| BRADY BUNCH | HAPPY DAYS | MANNIX | STAR TREK |
| CHARLIE'S ANGELS | HARRY O | MASH | THE SAINT |
| COACH | HIGHLANDER | MCCLOUD | TWIN PEAKS |
| COLUMBO | HOGAN'S HEROES | MONKEES | WINGS |
| COSBY SHOW | HOTEL | NIGHT GALLERY | WONDER YEARS |
| CYBILL | I LOVE LUCY | PRETENDER | X FILES |
| DRAGNET | | | |

The hidden TV show is: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRIZZLY ADAMS

Crossword 2366



- ACROSS**
- The administration of a strong electric current that passes through the brain to induce convulsions and coma.
 - (grammar) A verb tense used to relate past action.
 - The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
 - Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
 - The levorotatory form of dopa (trade names Bendopa and Brocadopa and Larodopa).
 - (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
 - A bin that holds rubbish until it is collected.
 - Supplementing or replacing manual effort.
 - A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
 - (British) The side of a vehicle nearest the kerb.
 - A woman's dress style that imitates the caftan cloaks worn by men in the Near East.
 - A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
 - Jordan's port.
 - Avatar of Vishnu.
 - A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
 - A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
 - Stem of the rattan palm used for making canes and umbrella handles.
 - A reason for wanting something done.
 - Being one hundred more than three hundred.
 - A small constellation in the polar region of the southern hemisphere near the Southern Cross and Chamaeleon.
 - The town was taken from the Turks by the Russians in 1877 after a siege of 143 days.
 - Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
 - Ribald humor.
 - Automatic data processing by electronic means without the use of tabulating cards or punched tapes.
 - The act of slowing down or falling behind.
 - Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus *Iva* with small greenish flowers.
 - A small quantity of liquid.
 - A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
 - A group of people attractively arranged (as if in a painting).
 - A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
 - Make amends for.
 - Having an elongated seating area.
 - The front bowling pin in the triangular arrangement of ten pins.
 - An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
 - Place in a line or arrange so as to be parallel.
 - California evergreen wild plum with spiny leathery leaves and white flowers.
 - (Norse mythology) Goddess of old age who defeated Thor in a wrestling match.
 - A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
 - An official at a baseball game.
 - Humble request for help.
 - A member of the Siouan people formerly inhabiting the Black Hills of western South Dakota.
 - A master's degree in business.

DOWN

- A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
- (law) A comprehensive term for any proceeding in a court of law whereby an individual seeks a legal remedy.
- A landlocked desert republic in north-central Africa.
- Colorless watery fluid of blood and lymph containing no cells and in which erythrocytes and leukocytes and platelets are suspended.
- (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- The capital of the state of Kansas.
- The capital and largest city of Japan.
- An arrangement of objects or people side by side in a line.
- A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
- A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
- An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
- A communist state in Indochina on the South China Sea.
- Hardened sugary exudation of various trees.
- Tropical genus of small trees or shrubs.
- Fallow deer.
- Intentional deception resulting in injury to another person.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- Sturdy carnivorous burrowing mammal with strong claws widely distributed in the northern hemisphere v l.
- A clear liquid secreted into the mouth by the salivary glands and mucous glands of the mouth.
- A metric unit of length equal to one hundredth of a meter.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Chief god of the Rig-Veda.
- Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
- The longest river of Asia.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- First in order of birth.
- A swindle in which you cheat at gambling or persuade a person to buy worthless property.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- Large hawk of the northern hemisphere that feeds chiefly on small rodents and is beneficial to farmers.
- A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- Performance of moral or religious acts.
- Any of various spectacular plants of the genus *Laelia* having showy flowers in many colors.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- Mature female of mammals of which the male is called 'buck'.
- A case or sheath especially a pollen sac or moss capsule.
- Great in vertical dimension.
- A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
- The head of a branch of an organized crime syndicate.
- Any of several trees producing edible oval smooth-skinned fruit with a single hard stone.
- A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
- Monotypic genus of palms of Australasia.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.

Yesterday's Solution

T A M C A N O N I C U T U G
 A B O A M E R I C A N E R O
 L O N A S T I G E R I A E A
 C R A B S T S H D A C T Y L
 L A B S E N I L E
 P A D O V A A R E A F A C T
 I N R O A D E C F R O E
 A D A M A B E L R A D A R
 F R G A G A H A L E N E S S
 F E E D B A G A C A U D A T E
 E W E R D D S O D E
 Y R A J A B A K K A
 C L E A N E D H E N N A E D
 H A N D E L A D A P A M B A
 A N I B A N D A G E D B A N
 D E D N Y M P H A E A A B A

Daily SuDoku

			7	1		8		
1	4	8		5		6	2	
	7							
		4	1			5	6	
	5					4		
9	6			5	3			
						1		
6	9			1		8	5	7
	8		7	9				

Yesterday's Solution

1	2	4	3	6	7	8	5	9
5	6	3	4	9	8	1	7	2
9	7	8	2	5	1	4	6	3
4	8	5	6	7	9	2	3	1
2	1	9	5	4	3	7	8	6
7	3	6	1	8	2	9	4	5
3	5	7	9	2	4	6	1	8
6	4	2	8	1	5	3	9	7
8	9	1	7	3	6	5	2	4

TV Listings



00:15 Overlord
02:20 Friday The 13th Part IV: The Final Chapter
04:05 The Quake
06:05 Men In Black 3
08:00 Spy Hard
09:30 We Still Steal The Old Way
11:15 Occupation
13:20 Men In Black 3
15:20 WarGames
17:25 Power Rangers
19:40 Twelve Monkeys
22:00 Predators

12:25 The First 48
13:20 Crimes That Shook Australia
14:15 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
15:10 It Takes A Killer
15:40 It Takes A Killer
16:05 Homicide Hunter
17:00 The First 48
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
19:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
20:00 It Takes A Killer
20:30 It Takes A Killer
21:00 The First 48
22:00 Homicide Hunter
23:00 Kids Behind Bars: Life Or Parole

05:30 Border Control: Spain
07:35 Border Control: Spain
08:00 Evil Online
08:55 Evil Online
09:50 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
10:45 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
11:40 Betrayed
12:35 Murder Chose Me
13:30 Murder Chose Me
14:25 Swamp Murders
15:20 The First 48
17:10 Betrayed
18:05 Evil Stepmothers
20:00 Disappeared
22:00 Bride Killa
23:00 Til Death Do Us Part

13:00 Doc McStuffins
13:30 Gigantosaurus
14:00 Puppy Dog Pals
14:30 Puppy Dog Pals
15:00 PJ Masks
15:30 T.O.T.S.
16:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
16:30 Vampirina
17:00 Elena Of Avalor
17:30 Sofia The First
18:00 T.O.T.S.
18:30 Bluey
18:40 Bluey
18:55 Doc McStuffins Shorts
19:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
19:15 Fancy Nancy Clancy
19:30 Vampirina
20:00 PJ Masks
20:30 The Lion Guard
21:00 Sofia The First
21:30 Elena Of Avalor
22:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
22:30 Bluey
22:40 Bluey
22:55 Doc McStuffins Shorts
23:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
23:15 Fancy Nancy Clancy
23:30 Vampirina

11:35 Phineas And Ferb
11:55 Phineas And Ferb
12:20 Gravity Falls
12:45 Gravity Falls
13:10 Furiki Wheels S1 Shorts
13:15 Phineas And Ferb
13:40 Phineas And Ferb
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:30 Phineas And Ferb
14:55 Phineas And Ferb
15:20 Big City Greens
15:45 Big City Greens
16:10 Supa Strikas
16:35 Supa Strikas
17:00 Disney 11
17:25 Lab Rats
17:50 Phineas And Ferb
18:15 Phineas And Ferb
18:40 Supa Strikas
19:05 Lab Rats
19:30 Lab Rats
19:55 Furiki Wheels S1 Shorts
20:00 Disney 11
20:25 Gravity Falls
20:50 Phineas And Ferb
21:15 Phineas And Ferb
21:40 DuckTales
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:55 Furiki Wheels S1 Shorts
23:00 Furiki Wheels
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost

02:55 Pawn Stars
03:20 Hunting Hitler
04:10 Project Impossible
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Detroit Steel
06:45 The Curse Of Oak Island
07:30 Storage Wars
07:50 Storage Wars
08:15 American Pickers Best Of
09:00 Pawn Stars
09:20 Pawn Stars
09:45 Hunting Hitler
10:30 Project Impossible
11:15 Forged In Fire
12:00 American Pickers
14:15 Truck Night In America
18:45 Hunting Hitler
21:00 Unidentified: Inside America's UFO Investigation
21:50 Ancient Aliens
22:40 Ancient Aliens
23:30 American Pickers



00:50 Wolves And Warriors
01:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
02:40 I Survived An Animal Attack
03:35 The Aquarium
04:25 Wolves And Warriors
05:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
06:02 Wildest Middle East
06:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
07:36 Dogs 101: New Tricks
08:25 Animal Cops Houston
10:10 The Zoo
11:05 Treehouse Masters
12:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:55 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
13:50 Crocodile Hunter
14:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
15:40 Pit Bulls & Parolees
16:35 Urban Predator: Lion On The Loose
17:30 Whale Wars
18:25 Animal Cops Miami
19:20 Keeping Up With The Kruger
20:15 The Vet Life
21:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
22:05 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
23:00 Urban Predator: Lion On The Loose
23:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees



00:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
00:27 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:50 Impractical Jokers
01:15 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
01:40 Teachers
02:05 Friends
02:55 South Park (Repeats)
03:20 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
03:45 Teachers
04:08 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
04:35 South Park (Repeats)
05:00 Friends
07:10 House Of Food
08:00 House Of Food
08:55 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
10:15 Friends
12:20 Ridiculousness
14:30 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team
17:10 Friends
19:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
21:30 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 Rachel Feinstein: Only Whores Wear Purple
23:30 Most Ridiculous



00:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
01:00 Alex & Co.
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:40 Alex & Co.
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Evermoor Chronicles
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:35 Violetta
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Raven's Home
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 That's So Raven
08:20 That's So Raven
08:45 K.C. Undercover
09:10 Bizaardvark
09:35 Jessie
10:00 Jessie
10:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
11:15 Bizaardvark
12:05 Liv And Maddie
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:45 Bunk'd
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:00 Disney Cookabout
15:25 Shake It Up
15:50 A.N.T. Farm
16:40 Penny On M.A.R.S
17:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
17:10 Amphibia
17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:00 Raven's Home
19:00 That's So Raven
20:00 Stuck In The Middle
20:30 K.C. Undercover
21:30 Dirty Jobs
22:30 Disney Mickey Mouse
22:35 Liv And Maddie
23:25 Jessie



00:15 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
01:05 Ripley's Believe It Or Not!
01:50 Mythbusters
02:35 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers
03:20 Misfit Garage
04:05 Misfit Garage
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Garage Gold
06:00 Shed And Buried
06:20 Garage Gold
06:45 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
07:35 Alaskan Bush People
08:20 Gold Rush
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
09:55 Salvage Hunters
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:10 How Do They Do It?
11:30 Misfit Garage
12:20 Misfit Garage
13:05 Shed And Buried
13:30 Garage Gold
13:55 Salvage Hunters
14:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:30 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
16:15 Bad Chad Customs
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 How Do They Do It?
19:25 Misfit Garage
20:15 Misfit Garage
21:00 Salvage Hunters: Classic Cars
21:50 Bad Chad Customs
22:40 Wheeler Dealers
23:30 Deadliest Catch: The Bait



00:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
01:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
02:00 Nightly Pop
03:00 Famously Single
04:00 WAGs
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 True Hollywood Story
11:40 E! News: Daily Pop
12:35 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
19:00 E! News: Daily Pop
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 Nightly Pop
23:30 Nightly Pop



00:30 Weapons At War
01:15 The Lost Evidence
02:00 UFO Hunters
02:45 How The Earth Was Made
03:30 Fifth Gear
04:15 Ancient Discoveries
05:00 Ancient Aliens
05:45 Cryptid: The Swamp Beast
06:30 UFO Files
07:15 Weapons At War
08:00 How The Earth Was Made
08:45 Fifth Gear
09:30 Ancient Discoveries
10:15 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Decoding The Past
11:45 UFO Files
12:30 Weapons At War
13:15 UFO Hunters
14:00 How The Earth Was Made
14:45 Fifth Gear
15:30 Ancient Discoveries
16:15 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Decoding The Past
17:45 UFO Files
18:30 Weapons At War
19:15 UFO Hunters
20:00 How The Earth Was Made
20:45 Fifth Gear
21:30 Ancient Discoveries
22:15 Ancient Aliens
23:00 MysteryQuest
23:45 UFO Files



00:10 Fish Tank Kings
01:00 48 Hrs Destination
01:50 What's For Sale With A View
02:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
03:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
03:55 Late Nite Eats
04:20 Destination Extreme
05:10 Access 360 World Heritage
06:00 David Rocco's Dolce India
06:50 Miguel's Feasts
07:40 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
08:30 Late Nite Eats
08:55 United Plates Of America
09:20 Log Cabin Fever
10:10 Pizza In Parma
10:35 Delicacy Hunter: On The Silk Road
11:00 Access 360 World Heritage
11:50 David Rocco's Dolce India
12:40 Miguel's Feasts
13:30 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
14:20 Late Nite Eats
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19:35 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
20:30 Late Nite Eats
20:55 United Plates Of America
21:25 Log Cabin Fever
22:20 Pizza In Parma
22:45 Delicacy Hunter: On The Silk Road
23:15 Access 360 World Heritage



00:00 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
00:55 Primal Survivor
01:45 Locked Up Abroad
02:35 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
03:00 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
03:25 Inside T4: Terminal Of Tomorrow
04:15 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
05:05 Primal Survivor
06:00 Locked Up Abroad
06:55 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
07:20 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
07:50 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
08:45 Primal Survivor
09:40 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
10:35 Car SOS
11:30 Brain Games
12:25 Access 360 World Heritage
13:20 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
14:15 Airport Security: Brazil
15:10 America Inside Out With Katie Couric
16:05 Lost Cities With Albert Lin
17:00 Car SOS
18:00 Access 360 World Heritage
19:00 Brain Games



00:20 The Curse Of Oak Island
01:05 Storage Wars
01:25 Storage Wars
01:50 American Pickers Best Of
02:35 Pawn Stars



00:00 The First 48
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
02:55 Psychic Kids
03:50 It Takes A Killer
04:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
05:30 The First 48
06:15 Homicide Hunter
07:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
08:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
08:20 The First 48
09:50 Homicide Hunter
11:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill

00:00 The First 48
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 The Lies That Bind
03:00 The Coroner: I Speak For The Dead



00:00 Dead Of Night
01:00 Twisted Sisters
02:00 The Lies That Bind
03:00 The Coroner: I Speak For The Dead



00:00 PJ Masks
00:30 The Lion Guard
01:00 Sofia The First
01:25 Disney Junior Music Nursery Rhymes
01:30 Gigantosaurus
02:00 PJ Masks
02:50 Paprika
03:00 Zou
03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:20 Paprika
04:40 Zou
05:25 Paprika
05:35 Paprika
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 PJ Masks
07:30 Gigantosaurus
07:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
08:00 The Lion Guard
08:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:00 PJ Masks
09:30 Bluey
09:40 Bluey
09:50 Vampirina
10:10 Vampirina
10:30 Elena Of Avalor
11:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
11:30 PJ Masks
12:00 Vampirina
12:30 Vampirina

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Elevate your intake of foods or supplements in order to stay alert and clear. You will want to feel good about yourself and the way you do things—this addition to your diet will certainly help your feeling of well-being. Be wise in your task to eliminate as much unnecessary stress as you can. Delegate some of your workload and say no when you feel there are unreasonable demands on your time. This is the time of the year to get outside and enjoy nature. Create and plan some fun opportunities to do just that—having fun with friends, co-workers, loved ones, etc., can lift everyone's energies. Work, health, diet and the other things that take care of us if we take care of them can provide a lot of satisfaction as a new life phase begins for you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

As a kind and considerate person, you will probably be helping your mom or sister with a move or some repair or a gardening project soon and you work to find boxes and someone from whom you can borrow a truck with which to be helpful with the project. A weekend move or some other project needs preparation and you have begun to list the things you can do to make that move a little easier. Your schedule at work is tedious and the occasional break in your day creates the distraction to which you take pleasure in contributing your energy. You enjoy helping and you have learned to say no when you are not able to help. You are able to help others see guidelines that they may not have considered. Music is for tonight.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The team spirit is strong this morning but can easily fall apart later in the day when there is a probability of some jealousy. Perhaps it is only competition that becomes a problem. Because you now know to be aware of this difficulty you can change frustrations to a satisfied result. You are in line to lead others, or perhaps you already lead others. You can handle emotional and personal issues—vulnerable areas—where angels fear to tread. You can eliminate most in-house difficulties. Quite a bit of personal research may be required for a class or just for some project you enjoy. You may find that scrolling through the links on a specific subject you will soon be writing down facts and data that complete your research. Rest early—this is a busy day.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Whatever it is you are doing today brings with it the opportunity to improve situations around you. The job of decorating or plotting out a plan which needs equations and percentages results in successful expressions of your abilities. Your profession shines and encourages others to make a positive impression with the talents they can exhibit. Being musically inclined you may enjoy singing on the trip home—your personality is infectious which invites others to jump in and join you in your music. You meet people easily and enjoy hanging out with your friends in the afternoon and sometimes in the evening. Learn from people who share your talents and you will advance in several areas of your life. You enjoy passing on your own experiences as well.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Yours is the most practical of environments. You can manipulate every idea or situation and put it to good use. Others value you for your ability to make no-nonsense decisions and you may receive compliments along those lines today. Someone will come to you with a just-suppose type of problem. You always seem sensible and will be able to lend good advice. Be careful that you do not become opinionated, however. You are, for the most part, unmoved by tears and feelings. Clear decisions affecting others can be made. You could be a bit restless this afternoon and may enjoy some fun time with friends. Be careful in the choices you make regarding the membership to some new club or group. Exciting new experiences await you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a definite sense of mission today. Above all, you are a progressive and you enjoy putting into practice that which is good for all. Some may find your job most difficult but you tend to enjoy the intricate ways to use your brain. Change and inner growth tends to come through your relationships with both friends and loved ones. Marriage could be very intense and not at all superficial. You may find yourself in a quandary between an environment that is very comfortable and supportive versus a real need to grow and progress. Making these two directions work together may be the big topic today. This evening there is plenty of time to enjoy the company of family. Laughter can be heard where the people gather in your home.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The aggressiveness you may be feeling this day can be used to push forward with your business plans. When it comes to mental work, you have a perfect gift for research and investigation. You enjoy examining and analyzing, in particular when it comes to psychological and sensitive areas of the mind. Your ability to sift through the dross and come up with what is essential is exceptional. You like to discuss and communicate, again, at a psychological and very personal level. Your mind is often on communication, how you present yourself and come across with others. This afternoon you will be able to spend some relaxing and enjoyable time with loved ones. You may feel unusually affectionate and physical this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Communicating is fun this morning. The mind and all that is mental will be the source of continued change and adjustment. Letters, writing, speaking and all the things that have to do with cognitive work assume great importance. Your mind tends to be full of new and creative ideas and concepts regarding some changes in your work development. The result of your efforts is attention-grabbing and you will find much satisfaction. You may be involved in hours of involved conversation with loved ones over how you will proceed with some changes at home, especially in obtaining a building permit. You have very clear insight, even genius, when it comes to discovering or inventing things. You require no teaching and your timing is perfect.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This seems to be a very superficial morning. It may not be possible for you to comprehend anything remotely meaningful or moving. There is perhaps a sense of the artificial, repetitive and senseless. You cannot seem to begin a project. Perhaps the out-of-doors is calling. Allow yourself some time to develop a working plan. While contemplating the day, you could come up with new ideas for adventure and relaxation—after the chores. This afternoon you seem better able to contend with any previous sluggishness. You are in a great mood this evening and can appreciate your own better qualities. You may see value in an older person or someone in authority. Everything comes together this evening and you are appreciative of life and love, etc.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may feel that you might lose your mind under the current mental pressure; you will not. You will benefit from logical insights, getting to the heart of things. This is a real time to work on your specific projects and to strengthen your career. After the noon break you may find that you need to perform some research at a library or museum. Fresh insight comes to you through mass-media news reports such as broadcasting, publishing, advertising—giving you a whole new perspective on a particular subject. You enjoy and appreciate your life situation. Your system of values may deepen, providing you with a better sense of discrimination and good taste. Romance is a plus this evening. A good beginning is a lovely dinner designed by you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Conflicts in the workplace can be settled through your intelligent comprehension and reason can be used in order to find positive results. You sense the needs of your customers and finding what fits their needs makes for successful outcomes. Selling property, collecting money and involving yourself in some supervisory activity are all favored today. Your waking time is filled with the job of fulfilling your life and helping others to fulfill theirs. It is important to you, that you do work or express your talents in ways that are heartwarming as well as financially fulfilling. Tonight you and your loved one may decide to venture a guess as to where or what you will be doing in two years, five years, etc. The future begins to take a positive shape.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are conservative and security-conscious and may have suggestions about better protecting important documents or valuables. There is a yearning to broaden your horizons. Law, politics, education, travel and religion are some of the areas where you may talk about having further adventures. Everything works together to bring out your unique traits. You may find that someone close to you understands and is supportive of your ideas. There is some indication of restlessness on your part and you may not appreciate someone's unrealistic approach to a situation. This evening you are able to put the finishing touches on some long-awaited creative venture. You would be smart to develop your creations more often and sell them.

Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina Faso	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Togo	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE



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Friday, November 22, 2019

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

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- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

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- Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- Referee reviewer of International journal of Dermatology.

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DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

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ENT Specialist

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Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

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- (IFSO) member .
- Faculty member of (BEST).
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Classifieds

Friday, November 22, 2019

CHANGE OF NAME

I Janma Malick Basha, holder of Indian Passport No: L0033431 do hereby change my name to given name: Janma, surname: Samsutheen, as per my Adhar No: 922101305645 for all purpose, I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents.

I Abdul Hamid Samsutheen, holder of Indian Passport No: L0033432, do hereby change my name to given name: Samsutheen, surname: Abdul Hameed, as per my Indian license No: TN:25-20070007446, for all purpose. I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents. (C 5688) 22-11-2019

I, Mitra Vinda Nalladeega, holder

of Indian Passport Number : P9486193, do hereby change my name to (Given Name : Mitra, Surname : Paul) as per my Adhar Number : 9297 6016 6997 for all purpose. I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents. (C 5473) 19-11-2019

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Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

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Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Sunny with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 21/11/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	14 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	07 °C		
ABDALY	19 °C	07 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	22 °C	10 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	21 °C	15 °C		
AHMADI	21 °C	13 °C		
NUWAISIB	23 °C	09 °C		
WAFRA	22 °C	08 °C		
SALMY	20 °C	06 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	11/22	Sunny and and some high clouds will appear later on	23 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 24 km/h
Saturday	11/23	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain later on	23 °C	08 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 32 km/h
Sunday	11/24	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rising dust with a chance for rain that might be	25 °C	12 °C	SE	18 - 50 km/h
Monday	11/25	Partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	23 °C	14 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:54
Sunrise	06:16
Zuhr	11:34
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	07 °C
MAX. RH	58 %
MIN. RH	15 %
MAX. Wind	NW 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Business

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2019

39 GM lawsuit won't torpedo Fiat Chrysler merger with Peugeot



40 Shares falter as China-US row wrecks deal hopes



41 Germany's exports to the US jump despite trade tensions



AL HAJJAH, Yemen: Yemeni beekeepers collect honeycombs at their apiary in the country's northern Hajjah province. — AFP

Tough times for Yemen honey trade

Production of 'Yemen's gold' under threat as war rages

ASLAM: Mohammed Manea has tended honey bees northeast of Sanaa for years, but despairs that the production of "Yemen's gold" is under threat as the war engulfing the country drags on. The conflict has blighted millions of lives and brought the economy to the brink of collapse. Cottage industries such as beekeeping, coffee growing and artisan manufacturing have been hit particularly hard. Beekeepers say clashes between the Saudi-supported government and Iran-backed rebels, alongside a humanitarian crisis that the United Nations has called the world's worst, have throttled their livelihoods.

"When we recently arrived in this part of Hajjah province on the front line between the aggressors (the Saudi-led coalition) and the Houthis, the trucks were hit by an air strike," Manea said. "One was carrying the honey, and

the other was carrying the bees," he added as he used his bare hands to remove a honeycomb frame crawling with bees from a hive in the rural region of Aslam. Yemen is renowned for its Sidr honey, named after the tree from which the nectar is gathered. The honey is referred to informally as "Middle Eastern manuka", a bow to its famed market rival from New Zealand.

'Production has dropped'

Sidr honey is said to have medicinal properties and is a bestseller in the souks and bazaars of the Gulf where it retails at a premium. It is also a natural product that is traditionally recommended to new mothers to augment breast milk production. Manea's fellow beekeeper, Ali Kabsh, agreed that the business was suffering badly.

"Honey production has dropped," he said

pointing to the challenges of exporting during wartime and the logistical difficulties of keeping bees. He estimated that the number of hives had dropped from between 800 and 1,000 when the war broke out in 2014 to between 100 and 150 currently. There are no official statistics that highlight the full damage suffered by the country's once proud producers of honey. Kabsh said that among the most significant problems he faced was travelling to find fresh flowers in bloom for his bees to harvest the nectar.

"A beekeeper's work depends on the seasons. Each region has its flowering season — so they have to move around to produce the honey," he told AFP. In Abs, another region in Hajjah province, beekeeper Ahmed Ali Al-Adili said he had struggled to export honey to Gulf states including Saudi Arabia. The international

airport in the capital Sanaa is under Houthi control and remains dormant, while most border crossings are closed, he said. "My production has decreased by 90 percent," Adili said. Other traditional trades in Yemen have also suffered.

The Al-Shinayni market in third city Tazeh once overflowed with handicrafts including products made by blacksmiths, potters and tailors. Now it is an arms bazaar in which a Kalashnikov assault rifle retails for little more than \$1,000. Tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, have been killed since the Saudi-led military coalition intervened in the conflict to support the internationally-recognized government against the Houthis. Around 3.3 million people have been displaced by the war and about 20 million people - more than two-thirds of the population - need humanitarian support to survive. — AFP

Business

No end yet in sight for Dubai home price rut

Chronic oversupply of homes rocks market

BENGALURU: Dubai's beleaguered property market won't rebound anytime soon, according to a Reuters poll of property market experts, largely due to a chronic oversupply of homes coupled with an economic slowdown in the city-state. Dubai house prices have slid by at least a quarter since mid-2014, the peak from its recovery from the 2009 debt crisis, and the end of this latest bout of weakness is not yet near. The Nov 6-20 Reuters poll of 10 economists and property analysts showed average property prices would decline 10% this year and another 5% next year.

While those forecasts were unchanged from a September poll, the median view for 2021 showed them falling at a slightly slower rate of

2.5% compared with 3.3%. An oversupply of homes remains a chronic problem in Dubai, according to every respondent who answered an additional question in the poll. "Oversupply has been a long-standing issue and recent developer activity indicates that this is unlikely to change in the near future," said Chris Hobden, head of strategic consultancy at Chestertons MENA.

The economy in Dubai, which is part of the United Arab Emirates, is heavily reliant on global trade, which has been under threat from the US-China trade war. To try to address the property market slump, the government set up a real estate planning commission in September but it is early days for measuring tangible results. "While the establishment of the Higher Committee for

Real Estate Planning suggests an appetite to address the imbalance moving forward, the Committee's market impact is still unclear," Hobden said. All but two respondents to another Reuters poll question said a further slowdown in activity was more likely than a rebound, while they all said a revival was at least a year away. "While the government has launched a number of initiatives to boost the economy, they will take time to filter through, which means the real estate market will continue on the downward trajectory until they do," said Jenny Weidling, manager of Research and Advisory at Asteco.

But recent sales transactions - which have been rising for 10 months - clocked their highest monthly tally since 2008 in October. Home own-

ership has become somewhat more affordable after years of falling prices. When asked to describe affordability of the average home on a scale of 1 to 10 - from extremely cheap to extremely expensive - the median response was 5.5, lower than given in September.

Controlling supply, further government stimulus, job creation and visa reforms were listed as potential effective policies for significantly stimulating activity and prices, respondents to another survey question said. "The combination of these government initiatives ... are expected to boost FDI, increase business activity and boost market sentiment and thereby boosting real estate demand", said Dima Isshak, a senior manager at CBRE MENAT. — Reuters

Workers of Samsung unite, new union tells chipmaker staff

HWASEONG: Under the watchful gaze of Samsung Electronics security personnel, health and safety staffer Ko Jee-hun stood outside his semiconductor plant, handing out leaflets touting the benefits of joining a trade union. For almost 50 years the firm avoided unionization of its employees—sometimes adopting ferocious tactics according to critics—while rising to become the world's largest smartphone and semiconductor manufacturer.

It is the flagship subsidiary of the giant Samsung Group, by far the biggest of the family-controlled conglomerates, known as "chaebol", that dominate the world's 11th-largest economy. But last week local authority officials in Suwon, where the chipmaker is headquartered, certified the National Samsung Electronics Union. It is affiliated to the powerful Federation of Korean Trade Unions umbrella group (FKTU), and analysts say the move could spell trouble down the line for the firm.

Ko is the union's deputy general secretary. "What's at stake here is more than wages," he said as he mounted a recruitment drive this week. "We demand communication and to have our voices heard. Because we are not just components." The leaflets he handed out showed a series of cartoon characters complaining about issues from holidays and lunch breaks to forced early retirement and unexplained bonus reductions. "The real union has arrived," it proclaimed, with a link and QR codes for employees to sign up.

The security guards would not let him stand directly outside the factory gate in Hwaseong, about 50 kilometers south of Seoul, forcing him to take up a position at the next intersection—but almost all passers-by took a copy. "The fight has just only begun," Ko said. Ahead of its formal establishment the union registered 400 ex-

pressions of interest from Samsung Electronics employees, the FKTU says. The new group has set itself a goal of signing up 10,000 members—almost 10 percent of the workforce—which analysts say could see it demand a right to collective bargaining.

'Dismiss before launch'

Samsung's founder Lee Byung-chul, who died in 1987, was adamantly opposed to unions, saying he would never allow them "until I have dirt over my eyes". Internal documents from 2012 obtained by a South Korean MP instructed managers to control "problematic personnel" seeking to establish unions. "To avoid claims of unfair labor practices, dismiss key organizers before the launch of a union," it read, among other recommendations.

But organizers have seized the opportunity presented by the left-leaning government of President Moon Jae-in—a former rights lawyer who represented trade unions—and controversy around the bribery trial of the company's vice-chairman Lee Jae-yong, the founder's grandson. It also faces challenges from the US-China trade war and export restrictions imposed by Tokyo on key supplies as part of a dispute with Seoul over wartime forced labor. "The level of repression is much weaker now than before," said the union's Ko. "I think the company is being cautious over possible repercussions." Samsung Electronics declined to comment to AFP.

Problematic personnel

Samsung's share price soared in 2016-17 and a staffer who asked to be identified only as Kim welcomed the union's establishment personally, hoping for higher year-end bonuses and other benefits. But the global chip market has since seen a prolonged downturn and Kim also feared the union's possible impact when even small production delays "could result in a significant loss of market share". "Waging a collective strike could be fatal," he added.

Samsung Electronics' no-union policy was "anachronistic", but it could now end up following "in the footsteps of Hyundai Motor embroiled in strikes every year", the Korea Times warned in an editorial. Higher labor costs could also impact its business model, which is based on large-scale, long term investments, said Se-



SEOUL: This photo shows a general view of the Samsung Electronics 'Nano city Hwasung Campus' semiconductor factory at Hwaseong, south of Seoul. — AFP

jong University business professor Kim Dae-jong. "With the labor union, it could find it much harder to carry out large investments with finances diverted to pay for increased wages," he said. Three unions were set up at Samsung last year, but none of them had the backing of a bigger federation and fizzled after attracting only a handful of members.

Samsung needed to move with the times and acknowledge that standards had changed since

its founder's time, said Chun Soon-ok, a labor campaigner and former MP whose brother burned himself to death in 1970 in protest at brutal working conditions in the textile industry. Unions also needed to move on from previous militancy, Chun added. In the past, unions and management "saw each other as competitors to knock down in a boxing ring", she said. "But the 21st century requires them to dance together in partnership." — AFP

Panasonic to stop LCD production

TOKYO: Japanese electronics titan Panasonic said yesterday it would end its production of liquid crystal display panels by 2021, as Chinese and South Korean manufacturers dominate the global market. The company, which makes everything from rice cookers to batteries for Tesla vehicles, currently makes LCD panels only for vehicles and industrial uses. The company said it had attempted to re-

spond to "the tough competition and evolution" of the business, but came to the conclusion that "further continuation of the business would be unviable."

Once a symbol of Japanese electronics that dominated the global consumer market, Panasonic stopped making LCD panels for televisions in 2016. The latest decision was unlikely to affect the firm's finances or impact jobs, a spokeswoman said.

Japanese electronics makers have undergone major structural reforms in recent years as South Korean and Chinese manufacturers continue to improve the quality of their products at a cheaper cost. — AFP

Business

GM lawsuit won't torpedo Fiat Chrysler merger with Peugeot

Fiat Chrysler to recall nearly 700,000 SUVs for electrical fault risk

MILAN: Fiat Chrysler's (FCA) planned \$50 billion merger with Peugeot owner PSA Group will not be blown off course by a shock lawsuit against FCA from General Motors, a source close to FCA said yesterday. The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, also said the lawsuit seeking "substantial damages" would not lead FCA and PSA to review the two companies' valuations in their proposed deal to create the world's fourth-biggest automaker. General Motors (GM) filed the lawsuit in the United States on Wednesday, alleging FCA had bribed United Auto Workers (UAW) union officials over years to corrupt the bargaining process and gain advantages, costing GM billions of dollars.



FCA, Peugeot in merger talks

"Talks are progressing smoothly," an FCA spokesman said yesterday.

PSA declined to comment on the GM lawsuit and its potential impact on the merger talks. Shares in FCA were down 2.7% at 0920 GMT, while PSA stock was 0.6% lower. FCA and PSA announced plans last month to combine forces to better tackle the cost of new technologies such as electric and self-driving vehicles as well as a downturn in auto markets.

In a letter to employees about the GM lawsuit, FCA Chief Executive Mike Manley said: "We are aston-

ished by this filing, both its content and its timing. We can only assume it was intended to disrupt our proposed merger with PSA." In September 2015, FCA's former Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne urged GM counterpart Mary Barra to consider a tie-up of the two carmakers. GM rebuffed FCA's advances.

GM on Wednesday alleged that, after it rejected a merger bid from FCA, Marchionne conspired to negotiate a new four-year contract with the UAW "designed, through the power of pattern bargaining, to cost GM billions." FCA will vigorously defend itself against this "meritless" lawsuit, said in the letter to staff, seen by Reuters. "We will not be slowed down by this act," he said, adding: "Let's keep the performance up as it has clearly got some of our competitors worried." Manley was not

named in the GM complaint and the source close to FCA said he was not linked to the case.

Fiat Chrysler to recall

Meanwhile, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV said yesterday it will recall nearly 700,000 sport utility vehicles worldwide because a faulty electrical connection could prevent engine starts or contribute to a stall. The recall, covering 2011 through 2013 model

vehicles, will address silicon deposits on the contact points of fuel pump relays that may interrupt electrical current, Fiat Chrysler said in a statement. It said it is unaware of any injuries or accidents related to the faulty vehicles.

The Italian-American automaker had previously recalled most of the same SUVs in 2014 and 2015 for issues with their fuel pump relays. The company, which last month announced it planned to merge with Peugeot owner PSA, said it would notify owners at a later date when they will be able to schedule repairs at dealerships. The recall includes around 528,500 vehicles in the United States, 34,700 in Canada, 18,100 in Mexico and 116,500 outside North America, it said. —Reuters

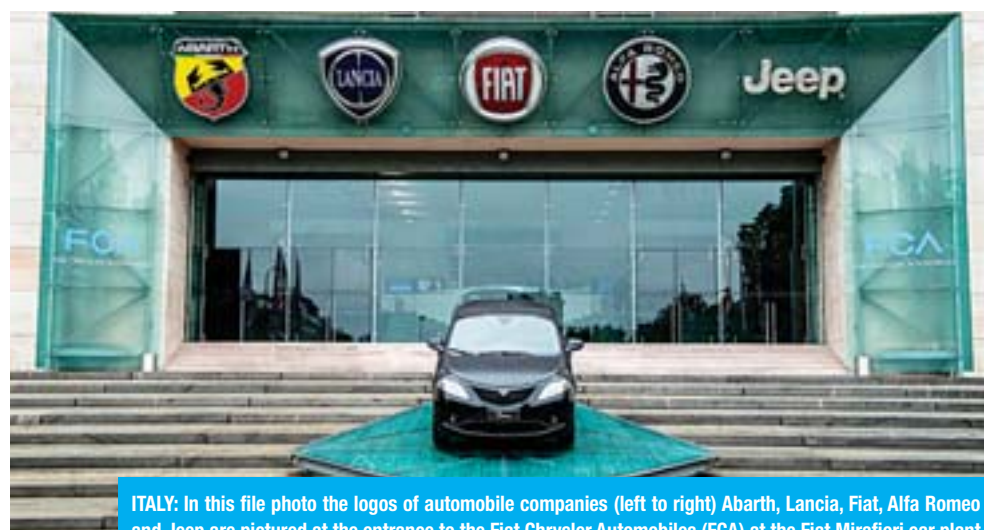
timated future lending risks and overvalued assets like property, presenting dangers in case of an economic downturn, she said. Last year, loans to the private sector increased more than five percent - the fastest pace in 15 years - at a time when "the economic outlook was better than at present," the Bundesbank noted. "Major systemic banks" were the biggest contributors, as weakened titans like Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank look to win market share from smaller savings banks and cooperatives that dominate the domestic environment. Moody's noted that German banks "have had very limited success in improving their high cost-to-income ratios", spending around 80 euro cents for each euro of revenue in 2018. Meanwhile risk-averse depositors prefer to heap up cash in savings accounts rather than opt for riskier investments like stocks - building deposits up to 40 percent of the sector's assets.

Moody's sees 'negative' outlook for German banks

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Ratings agency Moody's yesterday slashed its outlook for German banks from "stable" to "negative", warning their profitability and creditworthiness would "decline" in the coming months. "Banks' weak profitability will decline further as net interest income falls" amid low or negative interest rates set by the European Central Bank, Moody's vice-president Bernhard Held said in a statement.

While banks must for now set aside little cash to cover the risk of borrowers falling behind on payments, such charges are "unsustainably low", he judged. Especially smaller banks that rely on customers' deposits for their funding are seeing profits sapped by low rates, which have prompted many bosses to blast the ECB for the policy.

Also yesterday, Bundesbank (central bank) vice-president Claudia Buch warned German lenders' "vulnerability has gradually grown" to credit risks, as she presented the institution's annual financial stability report. Banks could have underes-



ITALY: In this file photo the logos of automobile companies (left to right) Abarth, Lancia, Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Jeep are pictured at the entrance to the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) at the Fiat Mirafiori car plant in Turin, Italy. —AFP

year Dodge Durango and Jeep Grand Cherokee SUVs, will address silicon deposits on the contact points of fuel pump relays that may interrupt electrical current, Fiat Chrysler said in a statement. It said it is unaware of any injuries or accidents related to the faulty vehicles.

The Italian-American automaker had previously recalled most of the same SUVs in 2014 and 2015 for

BMW ups orders of battery cells for electric cars

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German high-end carmaker BMW said yesterday it was massively increasing orders of battery cells for electric cars for the coming decade, as it plans dozens of new electrified models. The total increase of 6.2 billion euros (\$6.9 billion) will come from a new 2.9-billion-euro contract with Samsung-SDI and an increase from 4.0 to 7.3 billion in orders from China's CATL, BMW said in a statement. German carmakers have been squeezed by years of emissions scandals and imminent tougher greenhouse gas rules in Europe into making big bets on electric mobility.

Yesterday's announcement "secures long-term battery cell needs" for the company, BMW said, adding that it was itself organizing supplies of raw materials cobalt and lithium to the cell makers. "Compliance with environmental standards and respect for human rights have the highest priority" in sourcing the vital

elements from Australia and Morocco, BMW said. By 2023, the group plans to offer 25 "electrified" models including hybrids and full battery-electric vehicles. The first all-electric Mini compact cars are to roll off its Oxford, UK line later this year.

And it expects to double electric sales by 2021, followed by a "steep growth curve" of 30 percent annual expansion until 2025. Lithium-ion cells are the building blocks of the massive batteries built into electric and hybrid vehicles. But few carmakers have taken the huge financial risk of building up in-house production, as volumes remain low compared with combustion engines and the technology is swiftly developing. Rather, they prefer to farm out the battery work to specialist suppliers.

About two thirds of cell-making capacity is in China, with giant CATL alone accounting for one quarter of global supply. Japan's Panasonic, China's BYD and Korea's LG-Chem and Samsung-SDI round out the top five manufacturers. Some of the companies are expanding into Europe, with CATL building a factory in Erfurt that will initially supply BMW. But Paris and Berlin hope government backing can help found an "Airbus of batteries" to take on Asian competitors, with planned investments of between five and six billion euros - four billion to come from the private sector. —AFP

Business

Shares falter as China-US row over Hong Kong wrecks trade deal hopes

US stock futures fall 0.2%, Asia shares down

TOKYO: Global stocks took a beating yesterday as a fresh row between Washington and Beijing over US legislation on Hong Kong threatened to undermine their trade talks and delay a “phase one” deal that investors had initially hoped to be signed by now. European shares were on course to extend their losses with pan-European Euro Stoxx 50 futures down 0.62%, German DAX futures falling 0.68% and Britain’s FTSE futures down 0.48%. MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 1.2% to a three-week low, with Hong Kong’s Hang Seng tumbling 1.6% while Japan’s Nikkei dropped 0.4%. Chinese mainland shares dropped 0.3%.

US S&P500 futures were down 0.15%, having dropped as much as 0.6% in Asian trade, a day after all three major indexes fell, with the S&P 500 losing 0.38%. The US House of Representatives on Wednesday passed two bills intended to support protesters in Hong Kong and send a warning to China about human rights. The legislation, which has angered Beijing, has been sent to the White House for President Donald Trump’s approval. A person familiar with the matter said Trump was expected to sign it.

“China will surely take this as an interference into its domestic affairs and is likely to think it will no longer need to make concessions on trade,” said Norihiro Fujito, chief investment strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

The move came as trade experts and people close to the White House said completion of a “phase one” US-China trade deal could slide into next year, as Beijing presses for more extensive tariff rollbacks, and the Trump administration counters with demands of its own.

Trump said on Oct 11 that the deal could take as long as five weeks, and investors had initially expected an agreement by mid-November. Asked Wednesday about the status of the China deal, Trump told reporters in Texas: “I don’t think they’re stepping up to the level that I want.” Trade jitters sent the 10-year US Treasuries yield down to 1.736%, near its lowest levels in three weeks and down nearly 25 basis points from a Nov 7 peak of 1.973%, a three-month high. Similarly in the currency market the yuan hit three-week lows, trading as low as 7.0450 to the dollar in onshore trade. The dollar was soft against the yen at 108.59, compared to this week’s high of 109.07 touched on Monday, while gold held firm at \$1,470.2 per ounce. The euro was little changed at \$1.1077.

Tomoo Kinoshita, chief economist at Invesco Asset Management in Tokyo, said the market is unlikely to completely give up hopes on the trade deal. “There have always been some uncertainties in trade talks but that won’t erase positive effects from signs of bottoming out in the global manufacturing sector,” he said. The minutes from the Federal Reserve’s previous policy meeting published on Wednesday offered little guidance on what would cause policymakers to change their minds on the outlook after an increasingly divided Fed decided to hit the pause button in its easing cycle.



FRANCE: The stock tickers and financial display are pictured at the headquarters of the Pan-European stock exchange Euronext in La Defense district, near Paris. — AFP

Oil prices also dipped, paring some of their 2% gains made on Wednesday after a better-

than-expected US crude inventories report and as Russia said it would continue its cooperation with OPEC to keep the market balanced. Global benchmark Brent futures dropped 0.19% to \$62.28. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were down 0.16% at \$56.92 per barrel in early yesterday trade. — Reuters

OECD trims global growth forecast

PARIS: The OECD trimmed yesterday its 2020 global economic growth forecast and said it did not see a strong rebound in 2021 owing to risks stemming from trade tensions. The Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development now estimates that business activity around the world will expand by 2.9 percent next year, a decline of 0.1 percentage points from a previous forecast issued in September.

In 2021, the OECD, which groups the world’s wealthiest nations, sees global economic growth edging back up to 3.0 percent, according to its November 2019 Economic Outlook. OECD chief economist Laurence Boone noted that “for the past two years, global growth outcomes and prospects have steadily deteriorated, amidst persistent policy uncertainty and weak trade and investment flows.”

She said that while central banks had taken decisive and timely monetary decisions that partly offset negative effects of trade tensions, most governments had not done so on a fiscal level, for example by investing in long-term projects to improve infrastructure, advance digitalization of their economies and limit climate change. Owing to “persistent policy uncertainty and weak trade and investment flows,” she said the OECD now saw the global economy expanding at “the weakest rate since the global financial crisis” erupted in 2007.

The US economy, the world’s biggest, “is expected to slow to 2.0 percent by 2021, while growth in Japan and the euro area is expected to be around 0.7 and 1.2 percent respectively.” In China, the second biggest economy worldwide, growth was forecast to “continue to edge down, to around 5.5 percent by 2021”, Boone said. Other emerging-market economies are expected to recover “only modestly,” she added. — AFP

Uber may contribute transport pollution than solution

PARIS: Ride-hailing pioneer Uber, rather than being part of the solution to urban transport may be adding to related problems, especially pollution from diesel cars, a study showed yesterday. Transport & Environment, which groups NGOs in Europe to promote sustainable transport solutions, said Uber revolutionized the once heavily regulated taxi sector, attracting thousands of new Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) drivers.

But this “stellar increase in Uber drivers has not been offset by a similar reduction in taxi licenses... and Uber’s appearance did not accelerate the reduction of car trips in London and Paris.” Instead, “the convenience of door-to-door, app-based trip booking makes travelling by (hired) cars in cities more and more popular, risking a reversal of a 15 year trend of reducing car trips in cities,” the Brussels-based TE said in a summary of the study’s findings.

By the same token, “the uptake of ride-hailing services across EU cities also poses a risk to the fight against pollution and climate changing emissions.” Uber operations in London, Paris and Brussels likely pump out 525,000 tons of CO2 a year, equivalent to the emissions from 250,000 cars “which runs counter to the cities’ ambitions to reduce their climate footprint.”

These vehicles are mostly diesel, it said, noting that “only in London, where it is mandatory, is Uber making an effort to shift to cleaner, electric-powered vehicles.” Uber is currently unprofitable but valued at around \$49 billion on the markets as investors buy into its vision of a transport provider in a new world of electric vehicles and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

“If Uber continues its current business practice of adding

more combustion engine cars and fossil-powered kilometers in our cities, it is an obstacle to the transition to green and sustainable cities in Europe,” TE said. But Uber could also “do the right thing,” as promised in its share offer, and “stop adding fossil-fuelled cars to city roads and to rapidly electrify its existing fleet.” In response Uber said it was committed to moving away from privately owned cars “towards a shared, electric future.” “To do so, we are actively working with cities across Europe to improve access to clean, safe and affordable modes of transportation.” — AFP

SAGIA signs USD 2bn deals with world’s largest petrochemical companies

RIYADH: Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) has signed five memorandums of understanding (MoUs) worth USD two billion with a number of major petrochemical companies in the world. Governor of SAGIA Ibarhim Al-Omar said in a statement this was achieved through the Authority’s endeavors to market investment opportunities in the Kingdom and make them available for international companies. SAGIA aims at attracting quality investments in the petrochemicals sector, which is considered one of the main pillars of the Kingdom’s industrial strategy, he added. SAGIA signed the MoUs with BASF Company, SNF, PAM and Mitsui Co., and Shell Company, for cooperation to study and evaluate the establishment of a factory specialized in the field of energy and petrochemicals. — KUNA

Business

Germany's exports to the US jump despite trade tensions

Weaker euro helps German exporters

BERLIN: Strong German exports to the United States helped Europe's largest economy to avoid a recession in the third quarter, data showed yesterday, as companies benefitted from a weaker euro and trade diversion linked to the US-China tariff dispute. The detailed trade figures, compiled for Reuters from the Federal Statistics Office, underline that US demand for German goods remains strong, undaunted by President Donald Trump's threats to increase import tariffs on European cars.

Germany's export-reliant economy avoided slipping into recession in the third quarter as consumers, state spending and construction drove a 0.1% quarterly expansion. Exports also fared better than in the previous three months. Overall, exports grew 1.7% year-on-year in the third quarter after a

1.3% decline in the second. The US and France remained Germany's two biggest customers, the data showed. German exports to the US grew 7.6% year-on-year in the third quarter after a 5.3% increase in the previous three months. Exports to France rose 3.1% year-on-year after stagnating in the second quarter.

"Europe is benefiting from still being the unin-

involved third party in the American-Chinese trade conflict. This leads to trade diversion and helps European exporters," Jens Suedekum from the Heinrich-Heine-University in Duesseldorf told Reuters. Unexpected help for German exporters also came from France, where the economy is doing well thanks to structural reforms and fiscal stimulus measures enacted by President Emmanuel Macron. "This spilled over to German exporters," Suedekum said. "Chancellor Angela Merkel should send a thank-you note to Paris."

Side effects

Gabriel Felbermayr, president of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, pointed out that the euro had depreciated by 14% against the US dollar since the beginning of 2018. A weaker euro makes German ex-

ports less expensive. "The strong dollar is one of the macroeconomic side effects of Trump's trade policy towards China. It leads to trade diversion," Felbermayr said.

That means the US is increasingly buying goods from the European Union and Germany as tariffs make competing imports from China more expensive. The United States and China are locked in a



French stimulus spills over to Germany



HAMBURG: Aerial view of containers at a loading terminal in the port of Hamburg, Germany. —Reuters

trade war triggered by Trump. Both countries have levied punitive duties on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of each other's goods, roiling financial markets and threatening global growth.

But Felbermayr cautioned that the uncertainty created by Trump's 'America First' trade policy in the medium term will lead to stronger production of German companies in the United States, which will

weaken exports. "The relocation of jobs is already taking place but is not yet visible in the export figures," he said. This cautious tone was echoed yesterday by the finance ministry. It said in a monthly report that exports stabilized at the end of the third quarter, but a slowing world economy and persistent trade risks pointed to only moderate developments in the coming months. —Reuters

Nationalization in UK: Labor's plans for companies

BIRMINGHAM: Britain's opposition Labor Party unveiled its election manifesto yesterday, including a sweeping program of nationalization to reverse decades of pro-privatization public policy. Below are the private utility and infrastructure companies that Labor, currently lagging in opinion polls, says it wants to take back under state control:

Broadband

Labor has said it will nationalize telecoms provider BT's fixed line network to provide free full-fibre broadband for all. It will create British Digital Infrastructure to roll out a full-fibre network, including acquiring access to existing assets, and British Broadband Services to deliver free broadband. Labor said last week the plan would require a sweeping upgrade of Britain's internet infrastructure that would be paid for by raising taxes on tech firms such as Alphabet's Google, Amazon and Facebook. Labor said the proposal would cost about 20 billion pounds (\$26 billion) but the chief executive of BT said the plan could cost taxpayers as much as 100 billion pounds.

Rail

Labor wants to nationalize the rail industry within five years of winning power. The party says this will allow fares to be capped, improve the reliability of services and mean free wi-fi across the network. Britain's railways are already partly nationalized with the infrastructure operator Network Rail, which controls stations as well as tracks, tunnels and level crossings, in the public sector. But the train operating companies are mainly privately run under limited-term contracts. Under Labor's plans, the govern-

ment would wait for the contracts to expire and then take operations back into public hands.

Postal service

Labor wants to return Royal Mail, one of the world's oldest postal services, to state control six years after the company was privatized, saying this was a "historic mistake" and that the company was sold off too cheaply. The Conservative government's handling of the sale of the 503-year-old company has come under renewed scrutiny after Britain's spending watchdog concluded the government had set the price too low.

Water

Labor has proposed renationalizing water companies, which have been criticized for prioritizing dividends and executive pay over preventing leaks and improving water quality. Labor's second most powerful man, John McDonnell, said earlier this year the government would pay less than 15 billion pounds to investors when it renationalizes the companies.

Energy

Labor wants to nationalize the energy networks which transport electricity and gas to homes and businesses. The party's membership wants to go one step further and passed a motion at its annual conference in September proposing to nationalize Britain's largest energy suppliers.

Private sector contracts

Labor has vowed to nationalize all private finance contracts - which fund public infrastructure with private capital. There are 700 private finance contracts in existence worth about 60 billion pounds, a parliamentary watchdog said last year.

Oil company windfall tax

Labor said it will introduce a windfall tax on oil companies so that companies that knowingly damage the climate will help cover the costs. —Reuters

'Good neighbors'? US hospitals invest in land, housing to treat crisis

WASHINGTON: When Whitney Brown decided to move back to her hometown in Virginia after graduating from university two years ago, she ran into an obstacle: There was nowhere for her to live. She could not move back into her old home in Richmond, the state's prosperous capital, because her mother was looking to sell her house - nor could she find a place of her own that was both affordable and in a safe area. Developers were "building bigger houses, super-close together, that locals couldn't afford," Brown, 24, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.

Eventually, a real estate agent pointed her toward a different option: the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust, a nonprofit that buys homes, fixes them up and then sells them at a reduced price while keeping the titles to the underlying land. Community land trusts are on the rise across the United States as cities look for ways to ease an ongoing crisis of affordable housing. But the Maggie Walker land trust is unusual in how it was created: It was funded in large part by a hospital system, Bon Secours Mercy Health.

This month, Bon Secours was one of 14 healthcare systems across the United States that committed to over \$700 million in "place-based" investments, with a primary goal being the development of affordable housing. They are all part of a group called the Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN), a project of the Washington-based research group Democracy Collaborative. Since 2017 the network has grown to more than 40 health systems seeking to use their financial might and public sway to improve housing in their communities, according to David Zuckerman, the director. —Reuters

Sports

Women drivers can succeed in Formula E, says Venturi's Wolff

LONDON: Formula E starts its sixth season in Saudi Arabia today with an all-male cast of drivers but Venturi's Susie Wolff, the only woman to run a team in the electric series, says change will come. While a woman has not started a Formula One grand prix since the late Italian Lella Lombardi in 1976, three have competed in Formula E since the city-based championship began in 2014.

None have had staying power, however, with only Swiss Simona de Silvestro completing a season in 2015/16 for the U.S. Andretti team and scoring four points. Britain's Katherine Legge and Italian Michaela Cerruti lasted two and four races respectively in 2014/15 before being dropped.

"I think there's no reason why a woman can't be successful in Formula E," Wolff told Reuters in a telephone interview ahead of the opening race. "I definitely see that coming in the future." British racer Jamie Chadwick, winner of the inaugural all-female W Series this year, has expressed interest and tested with the Nio team in Saudi Arabia a year ago and in Morocco last January.

Beitske Visser, the Dutch racer who was runner-up to Chadwick, was Formula E test and reserve for BMW Andretti last season. De Silvestro, 31, drove a Venturi when nine women joined the men in testing after last year's inaugural Saudi race. The Swiss is now with Formula E newcomers Porsche as a test driver.

"If I had a gap in my driver lineup and there

was a woman capable, like Jamie, have no doubt I would put her in the car," said Wolff, a former Williams F1 development driver whose husband Toto runs Formula One champions Mercedes. "And I would hope that would be the case for other manufacturers."

BIGGEST ISSUE

Wolff, who competed in the German Touring Car Championship (DTM) but has now hung up her helmet, wants to see more women racing against men generally. A critic of the W Series single sex concept when it was announced, she recognised women needed more track opportunities.

"Overall, there is a positive to those women racing," she says now. "Our biggest issue is the lack of young talent coming up the ranks. And that's at every level. There's a real lack of young girls entering the sport."

"What's changed massively in the last three years is that there are now a lot of opportunities for women. Before there hadn't been but now the opportunity's there. "The truth is we don't always have the talent there to put forward. That's the worrying thing and where we've got to be very proactive now to get enough young women coming into the sport so they can rise through the ranks."

All of the Formula E champions to date have been ex-F1 drivers and the field draws heavily from that world, with nine of the current 24 having previous grand prix experi-



Susie Wolff (Second left) with Venturi Formula E team.

ence. Venturi have Brazilian Felipe Massa, Formula One championship runner-up with Ferrari in 2008, along with Swiss-Italian ex-DTM driver Edoardo Mortara who won a race last year.

The Monaco-based team are using the same powertrain as Mercedes, effectively giving them identical cars to the German manufacturer's, and announced yesterday a new title sponsor in telecoms company ROKiT.

ROKiT are also title sponsors of Williams F1, coincidentally the only Formula One team to be run by a woman. Wolff said her past Williams connections had played no part, however.

"Actually it all came about because one of the businesses that ROKiT has, called Smart Cities, basically puts internet connections into city centres," she said. "I think Formula E is attractive because of the new technology and the fact that it's sustainable." — Reuters

Lyon's ex-All Black Ngatai wary of Leinster test

PARIS: Lyon's former New Zealand centre Charlie Ngatai says hosting record four-time winners Leinster in the Champions Cup on Sunday will be "massive" for the inexperienced club at the highest level of European rugby.

The French outfit, who lead the Top 14, are only in the competition for the second time and lost all six of their pool matches last season. "It's going to be massive. They're going to want to come down here and give it their best," Ngatai told AFP.

"I guess we have a chance to put a foot forward to show how we can hold our own against a big team. "We had a taste of it last year, we know what the standards are and we have to lift our standards each game."

The 25-14 defeat to Northampton last weekend was their second defeat in three games after having remained unbeaten for the opening seven rounds of the domestic campaign. "It wasn't where our standards have been this season. We were disappointed in our own performance. At this level you can't give away as many penalties," Ngatai said.

Lining up outside the one-time All Black Ngatai could be Fiji winger Josua

Tuisova who joined 'The Wolves' from Toulon for the new campaign. The 2016 seven-a-side Olympic champion is an injury doubt due to an ankle problem but has scored once in two games following his arrival at the Matmut Stadium after being knocked out of the Rugby World Cup pool stages.

"He can turn nothing into something. You just give him the ball and he feeds off that. You can see his raw power and his ability to break the line," Ngatai said. "The more ball we can give him, the more dangerous it is for the opposition to try and defend him. He pulls in two or three defenders which they have to worry about. He opens up more space for us," he added.

Elsewhere this weekend, title holder Saracens welcome the Ospreys in their first home fixture since they were handed a £5 million (\$6.5 million) fine and docked 35 points for breaching Premiership Rugby's salary cap rules.

On Sunday, South Africa's World Cup winning fly-half Handre Pollard could make his Montpellier debut as they play Gloucester after he replaced the departed Aaron Cruden in the French club's squad for the competition. — AFP

Rennie won't make excuses for rebuilding Wallabies

MELBOURNE: Newly appointed Wallabies coach Dave Rennie knows he will be expected to deliver instant success to win over sceptical fans and says he will not reach for the "rebuilding" excuse if results do not go as planned. The New Zealander was handed the reins on a three-and-a-half year deal on Wednesday and will take over a Wallabies team in transition after their quarter-final exit from the Rugby World Cup Japan.

"The Australian public expects the results and they'll probably expect it immediately," Rennie, who starts the job next July, told local media yesterday.

"I don't want to give the players any excuses that we're building and all that sort of stuff so the expectation is that we're going to work really hard, we're going out to win footy. "I just feel if you use excuses, you're giving players an out to maybe under-perform, so I guess like the Aussie public, we'll all be thinking the same thing, we'll be desperate to perform well and keep building on that."

Australia's next internationals come in a two-match series against Ireland in July. Rennie, who will finish up his coaching contract with Glasgow Warriors in June, will have little time to get acquainted with the Australian set-up but will have Director of



Newly appointed Wallabies coach Dave Rennie.

Rugby Scott Johnson on the ground sizing up player prospects. Rennie said he would look to focus more on domestic players in Super Rugby in building his Wallabies squad rather than look at others overseas. "It's a big question isn't it, because the advantage of having guys playing Super Rugby means that we've got access to them, we've got influence," he said.

"And obviously picking players from overseas, maybe it works alright in a World Cup year but it's difficult to have influence. "Best case scenario is that we're going to try and develop guys within Australia and promote them and try and build experience that way." — Reuters

Australia skittle Pakistan to seize control at the Gabba

BRISBANE: Australia seized the advantage on the opening day of the first Test when they bowled Pakistan out for 240 just before stumps at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. After the visitors resisted stubbornly in the first session, reaching 57 for no wicket at lunch, pace trio Mitchell Starc (4-52), Josh Hazlewood (2-46) and Pat Cummins (3-60) tore through the Pakistan batting order to put the hosts in charge at the close of play.

Australia seized the initiative after lunch when they took five wickets for just 19 runs, reducing Pakistan from 75 for none to 94 for five. The pacemen then struck again late in the day, with 16-year-old debutant Naseem Shah just squeezing out Starc's hat-trick ball.

"It was quite a welcome to Test cricket wasn't it?" Hazlewood said. Hazlewood said the fast bowlers had enjoyed the extra bounce at the Gabba. "The way we fought back in the second session was perfect," he said.

"We probably bowled too short in the first session, but we got better as the day went on. It was a pretty good comeback I thought." Pakistan were rescued from complete disaster by Asad Shafiq who played a lone hand, scoring 76 well-made runs.

Shafiq came to the crease with his side 75 for two, then saw Haris Sohail (1) and Baba Azar (1) fall for the addition of only two runs. But good partnerships of 49 between Shafiq and Mohammed Rizwan, who made 37, and then 84 with Yasir Shah (26) enabled the visitors to achieve a respectable score.

"I knew that if we could build a good partnership it could help the team," Shafiq said. "We didn't reach the total we wanted but still we got a respectable total and with the bowling unit we've got, we will put up a very good fight."



BRISBANE: Pakistan's Yasir Shah (R) plays a shot as Australia's wicketkeeper Tim Paine (L) looks on during day one of the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. —AFP

NO-BALL CONTROVERSY

Rizwan, who was counter-attacking fearlessly, fell controversially with Cummins appearing to have just overstepped the mark, only for TV umpire Michael Gough to give the benefit of the doubt to the bowler. Yasir batted bravely but when the Australians took the second new ball, Pakistan's resistance was all but over. The visitors had frustrated the Australian pace attack in the first session, going into lunch at 57-0 with openers Azhar Ali and Shan Masood unbeaten on 28 and 21 respectively.

The pair began to open up after the break with some sparkling attacking shots, but Hazlewood and

Cummins at last found their length and began to turn the screws. The pressure began to tell and with the score on 75 Masood waved at a Cummins delivery outside off stump and edged to Steve Smith at second slip. Azhar went the next ball when he edged Hazlewood to Joe Burns at first slip, before Sohail and Azam both fell to poor shots. When Nathan Lyon had Iftikhar Ahmed caught at bat-pad for seven, Pakistan were reeling at 94 for five before Shafiq and Rizwan steadied the ship in the half-hour before tea.

Pakistan earlier won the toss and chose to bat on a hot and humid morning in Brisbane. Azhar and

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard from the first day of the first cricket Test between Australia and Pakistan at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday:	
Pakistan	
Shan Masood c Smith b Cummins	27
Azhar Ali c Burns b Hazlewood	39
Haris Sohail c Paine b Starc	1
Asad Shafiq b Cummins	76
Babar Azam c Burns b Hazlewood	1
Iftikhar Ahmed c Labuschagne b Lyon	7
Mohammad Rizwan c Paine b Cummins	37
Yasir Shah b Starc	26
Shaheen Afridi c Paine b Starc	0
Naseem Shah c and b Starc	7
Imran Khan not out	5
Extras (b4, lb8, nb1, w1)	14
Total (86.2 overs)	240
Fall of wickets: 1-75 (Masood), 2-75 (Azhar), 3-77 (Sohail), 4-78 (Azam), 5-94 (Iftikhar), 6-143 (Rizwan), 7-227 (Yasir), 8-227 (Afridi), 9-227 (Shafiq), 10-240 (Naseem)	
Bowling: Starc 18.2-52-4 (1w), Hazlewood 20-6-46-2 (1nb), Cummins 22-7-60-3, Lyon 17-3-40-1, Labuschagne 8-0-24-0, Smith 1-0-6-0.	
Australia: Joe Burns, David Warner, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Matthew Wade, Tim Paine (capt), Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Josh Hazlewood	

Masood began cautiously against the Australian pace duo of Starc and Hazlewood, who bowled quickly without really troubling the Pakistan openers. The visitors crawled to 33 at the first drinks break and took almost two hours to reach 50, bringing up the half-century opening stand with a Masood boundary through square leg in the penultimate over before lunch. —AFP

Stokes torments New Zealand

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: New Zealand targeted the wicket of "freak" Ben Stokes yesterday as they battle to get back into the first Test against England at Mount Maunganui. The honours were even when the New Zealand-born Stokes went to the middle just before tea on day one with England 120 for three.

But by stumps, with Stokes in imperious form, the score had doubled and England will resume on Friday on 241 for four, with the 28-year-old all-rounder unbeaten on 67. "He's a special talent. He's a bit of a freak at times," New Zealand short-ball specialist Neil Wagner said after Stokes clubbed his bouncers four times to the boundary.

"Everyone wants to get him out because you know what an important wicket it is... but that's my thing, we always try and strive to get the good players out." Stokes has tormented New Zealand this year after he played a key role in England's nail-biting victory on boundary countback in the 50-over World Cup final in July.

As well as dispatching Wagner's short stuff, he also showed a liking for the fuller delivery when he took four boundaries off successive balls from Trent Boult, including one that burst through the hands of the usually reliable Ross Taylor at first slip.

It was a drop that frustrated the New Zealanders who had earlier seen opener Rory Burns survive three chances

including a waist-high edge that went between Taylor and Tom Latham in the slip cordon. However, Wagner believed that despite England going into day two with six wickets in hand, the game was not out of New Zealand's control. "They haven't got away from us. If we can come in the morning and get a couple of early wickets and put it back on them we'll be in a really good position. I think we're happy with where we are at."

Stokes and Joe Denly (74) put on 83 for the fourth wicket to lift England after they had slowly accumulated runs through the first two sessions against a New Zealand bowling tight lines.

Denly had been locked in a fascinating battle with Wagner where the edges fell short of the cordon, and balls that did beat the bat then missed the stumps. But Denly refused to be intimidated by the onslaught and smacked five rising deliveries to the fence. England's top three played their part in getting a safe start with Surrey pair Rory Burns (52) and Dom Sibley (22) putting on 52 for the first wicket before Burns and Denly added 61 for the second. Captain Root, however, took 21 balls to get off the mark with a two and then wafted at a wide next delivery from Wagner and was caught cheaply but a caught behind appeal when he was on 10, and the total 14, was turned down when replays showed he edged the ball. He gave further chances on 37 and 44 before reaching his half-century and then being removed by Colin de Grandhomme. While he would like to have gone on, Burns said he was satisfied with England's start. "What we were trying to do was set up the game the way we have — establish yourself and try and bat big first innings," he said,

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard at stumps on day one of the first Test between New Zealand and England at Mount Maunganui yesterday:	
England	
R. Burns c Watling b de Grandhomme	52
Sibley c Taylor b de Grandhomme	22
J. Denly c Watling b Southee	74
J. Root c Southee b Wagner	2
B. Stokes not out	67
O. Pope not out	18
Extras: (b1, lb4, nb1)	6
Total: (four wickets, 90 overs)	241
Fall of wickets: 1-52 (Sibley), 2-113 (Burns), 3-120 (Root), 4-203 (Denly)	
To bat: J. Buttler, S. Curran, J. Archer, M. Leach, S. Broad	
Bowling: Boult 22-6-61-0, Southee 21-6-46-1, de Grandhomme 19-5-28-2 (nb1), Wagner 23-4-77-1, Santner 5-0-24-0.	
New Zealand: J. Raval, T. Latham, K. Williamson, R. Taylor, H. Nicholls, B. Watling, C. de Grandhomme, M. Santner, T. Southee, N. Wagner, T. Boult	

adding that England welcomed the Wagner bombardment.

"It's quite enjoyable really. He's a competitor and it's always a different challenge to someone who is pitching it up, swinging it, and he bowls short stuff more than fuller stuff and it's always a challenge and it's a good one to have."

Wagner finished the day with one for 77 while the most successful New Zealand bowler was de Grandhomme, with his gentle medium pacers drifting away from the batsmen which produced two for 28. —AFP

Sports

Murray leads Britain to opening Davis Cup win, Spain reach last eight

MADRID: The Davis Cup has a new format but Andy Murray's love of a comeback remains intact after the Scot battled from behind to beat Tallon Griekspoor on Wednesday as Great Britain edged past Holland. Murray came from a set down and then trailed 4-1 in the decider in Madrid before beating the spirited Griekspoor, ranked 179 in the world, 6-7 (7/9), 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

"I've found a way to win matches many times in my career when I've not been playing well," Murray said. "You can draw on that a little bit." A scrappy victory gave Great Britain the lead in their opening Group E tie and while Dan Evans lost the second singles rubber to Robin Haase, Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski finished the job in the doubles.

Rafael Nadal won his 26th consecutive Davis Cup singles match later on Wednesday as Spain booked their place in the quarter-finals with a 3-0 victory over defending champions Croatia.

Novak Djokovic, meanwhile, cruised past Yoshihito Nishioka to help Serbia beat Japan by the same scoreline. Murray had given short shrift on Tuesday to those he believes have been too quick to criticise the revamped Davis Cup, which for the first time is featuring all 18 World Group countries competing for the trophy across a single week in one venue.

And in what will be music to the ears of the organisers, among them Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique, Murray was full of praise for the

atmosphere inside the Caja Magica's cosy Stadium 3.

"The atmosphere was brilliant," Murray said afterwards. "That was the one concern I had about the event, about it being on neutral ground, but it was great." British fans have been second only to Spanish in terms of tickets sold so far and the strong attendance for Murray's opener inside the tournament's smallest court, with a capacity of 2,500, has not been consistent across other morning matches.

Murray, along with Nadal and Djokovic, is one of the competition's biggest attractions this week and Britain's prospects of progressing to the quarter-finals look good ahead of Thursday's tie against Kazakhstan.

It remains to be seen whether Murray plays or is rested against the Kazakhs but he was given a stiff workout by the 23-year-old Griekspoor, who was a surprise pick in the Dutch team ahead of Botic Van de Zandschlop.

"About an hour before the match it changed," said Murray. "I didn't know much about his game." But Murray again dug deep, his experience and resilience proving the difference as Griekspoor lost his nerve and then the match.

Haase outlasted Evans 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 while Jamie Murray and Skupski held on for a 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) win over Wesley Koolhof and Jean-Julien Rojer. Djokovic enjoyed a more comfortable start as he cruised to a 6-1, 6-2



MADRID: Great Britain's Andy Murray serves the ball to Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor during the singles tennis match between Great Britain and Netherlands at the Davis Cup Madrid Finals 2019 in Madrid. —AFP

victory over Nishioka in a straightforward win for Serbia against Japan.

Serbia will play France today to decide who goes through as winners of Group A. "It's probably one of the biggest challenges we can have in this competition, playing against France, one of the most successful nations in Davis Cup, and definitely one of the strongest teams," Djokovic said.

Nadal saw off Croatia's Borna Gojo 6-4, 6-3 and then helped Spain win the doubles

rubber alongside Marcel Granollers. Argentina could have secured progress by beating Germany but lost all three matches as Philipp Kohlschreiber beat Guido Pella and Jan-Lennard Struff overcame Diego Schwartzman to establish an unassailable advantage. Germany will advance if they beat Chile on Thursday.

Canada are already through and will meet Australia in the last eight, after Leyton Hewitt's team beat Belgium 2-1. —AFP

Sulaibkhat Sports Club boxers crowned champions

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Sulaibkhat Sports Club boxers was crowned champion of Kuwait's Beginners Boxing Championship which was held at Jahra Club. Sulaibkhat boxers won 8 gold medals and one silver. Second place went to Fahaeel with three gold and five silver, while Kuwait Club ended in third place with one gold, two silver and one bronze.

The closing day was attended by Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi.

Mansi appreciated the clubs' cooperation and their interest to develop and improve boxing through the selection of outstanding talents. He said we saw outstanding levels during the finals in various weights, which reflect the outstanding efforts of technical and administrative departments at the clubs, and is an indicator of a better future for Kuwait boxing.

Mansi said we at the Kuwait Boxing Federation stand at the same distance from all clubs, and considers all complaints or objections, and we are ready to receive them at any time, and their efforts are appreciated.



Browns trying to stack wins as Dolphins visit

MIAMI: The Cleveland Browns have reached the soft part of their schedule riding a two-game winning streak, and their playoff hopes remain alive as they prepare to host the Miami Dolphins on Sunday.

Four of the final six games for the Browns (4-6) are against teams with a combined five wins: Miami, the Arizona Cardinals, and two against the winless Cincinnati Bengals. Further, the Browns are 2-0 in their division with games remaining against the Baltimore Ravens and Pittsburgh Steelers, both of whom they've beaten. While chasing down the Ravens in the division is unlikely, a wild-card spot is attainable for the Browns, currently the 10th seed in the AFC.

But the big question for the Browns is, can they put aside the distractions to string together quality games and take care of business against inferior competition? Their first challenge comes in the form of the Dolphins (2-8), who had won two straight before Sunday's loss to the Bills.

The Browns are heavy favorites and are playing their third straight home game, but they've lost their best pass-rusher, Myles Garrett, indefinitely (pending appeal) after his infamous meltdown last week against Pittsburgh.

And the Dolphins, despite their lack of talent, play disciplined football. That's a stark contrast to the Browns, who are third in the league in penalties assessed (87) and No. 1 in penalty yardage assessed (822), nearly twice as much as the league-low Dolphins (444).

Miami also leads the league in fewest penalties assessed (55). But in every other way, all signs point to the Browns being able to dominate the Dolphins. Behind running back Nick Chubb, the Browns are 12th in the NFL at 121.9 yards rushing per game and fifth in yards per carry (4.92); the Dolphins average 148.3 rushing yards allowed, second worst in the league behind only the hapless Bengals. —Reuters

Sports

Clippers win OT thriller over Celtics

LOS ANGELES: Lou Williams scored 27 points, and Paul George added 25 points and eight assists to help the Los Angeles Clippers notch an intense 107-104 overtime victory over the visiting Boston Celtics on Wednesday night. Kawhi Leonard returned from a three-game absence caused by a knee injury to score 17 points on 7-of-20 shooting. Patrick Beverley corralled a career-best 16 rebounds to go along with 14 points and seven assists, and JaMychal Green added 10 points as Los Angeles won its third straight game. Jayson Tatum scored a season-best 30 points for Boston. Marcus Smart recorded 15 points and eight assists, Brad Wanamaker added 14 points, and Kemba Walker had 13 points and nine rebounds, shooting just 4-for-17 from the field. The contest marked the first time George and Leonard played together since both joined the Clippers in the offseason. Wednesday's game was George's fourth of the campaign.

MAVERICKS 142, WARRIORS 94

Luka Dončić scored 22 of his game-high 35 points in the first quarter as host Dallas made quick work of injury-riddled Golden State in a 48-point thrashing. Dončić ran up his 35 points in only 26 minutes, hanging around long enough to record a second straight triple-double with a game-high-tying 10 rebounds and a game-high 11 assists. According to ESPN, the 25:30 total that Dončić played was the least court time for a player in a 30-point triple-double in NBA history. Tim Hardaway Jr. went 4-for-4 from 3-point range on a 20-point night against his dad's former team, and the Mavericks shot 22-for-38 (57.9 percent) on treys en route to their third straight win. Rookie Eric Paschall led Golden State with 22 points.

BUCKS 135, HAWKS 127

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points and 11 rebounds, pacing Milwaukee to a win at Atlanta. It was the ninth time that Antetokounmpo has had 30 points and 10 rebounds in a game this season, tops in the NBA. He has accomplished the feat in eight of his past nine games. The Bucks have won five straight and nine of their past 10. Eric Bledsoe added 28 points, seven rebounds and five assists for Milwaukee. Atlanta was led by rookie De'Andre Hunter, who scored a career-high 27 points — 11 more than his previous best — and a career-best 11 rebounds. Trae Young added 25 points and eight assists, and rookie Cam Reddish scored a career-high 17 points.

WIZARDS 138, SPURS 132

Bradley Beal scored 21 of his 33 points in the third quarter as host Washington held on to beat sliding San Antonio. Beal eclipsed 30 points in four consecutive contests for the first time in his career as the Wizards sent San Antonio to its first seven-game losing skid since Gregg Popovich's first season as Spurs coach in 1996-97. Former Spurs forward Davis Bertans and Ish Smith each added 21 points as Washington avenged a 124-122 setback to San Antonio on Oct. 26. DeMar DeRozan scored 31 points for the Spurs.

HEAT 124, CAVALIERS 100

Duncan Robinson scored a career-high 29 points — making seven 3-pointers in a decisive second quarter — as host Miami routed Cleveland. Rookie guard Tyler Herro added 22 points

as the Heat improved to 6-0 at home this season. Robinson, a 6-foot-7 forward who went undrafted last year, made 9 of 15 3-point tries, falling one short of the team record of 10 3-pointers held by Mario Chalmers and Brian Shaw. Cleveland's Kevin Love, who had missed one game due to back tightness, returned to contribute 25 points and 13 rebounds. Larry Nance Jr., who had missed two straight games due to a sprained left thumb, returned to amass 16 points and nine rebounds.

JAZZ 103, TIMBERWOLVES 95

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 30 points — including six 3-pointers — and Donovan Mitchell added 26 to lead Utah over Minnesota in Minneapolis. Rudy Gobert had 12 points, 15 rebounds and five blocks for the Jazz. Mike Conley totaled 16 points, eight assists and six rebounds. Utah snapped a two-game losing streak and earned its third road win of the season. Andrew Wiggins finished with 22 points to lead the Wolves. Karl-Anthony Towns added 14 points and 12 rebounds. The Jazz shot 42.4 percent from 3-point range and scored 20 points off 13 Minnesota turnovers.

NETS 101, HORNETS 91

Jarrett Allen totaled season highs of 22 points and 17 rebounds and Brooklyn defeated Charlotte in New York. The Nets won for the second time in three games without Kyrie Irving, who sat out due to right shoulder impingement. Spencer Dinwiddie started for Irving and contributed 20 points while tying a season high with eight assists. Allen enjoyed one of the most productive games of his career and recorded his fifth double-double of the season. Taurean Prince added 20 points while shooting 6-for-15 in a game the Nets never led by more than 12. Terry Rozier topped the Hornets with 18 points.

BULLS 109, PISTONS 89

Lauri Markkanen reached the 20-point mark for the first time since the season opener with 24 points, and host Chicago ended a three-game losing streak by pounding slumping Detroit. Markkanen, who was averaging 12.3 points in nine games this month, made half of his 14 field-goal attempts and 7 of 11 free throws. Tomas Satoransky supplied 15 points and seven assists, and Shaquille Harrison had 15 points, 11 rebounds, five assists and three steals for Chicago. Former Bull Derrick Rose scored 18 points off the bench for Detroit, which has lost five straight and is 1-7 on the road. Blake Griffin scored 16 points and Luke Kennard had 14, but both shot just 4 of 15 from the field.

76ERS 109, KNICKS 104

Joel Embiid had 23 points, 12 rebounds and five assists while Ben Simmons hit the first 3-pointer of his career, and Philadelphia overturned a 17-point deficit on the way to a victory over visiting New York. Simmons hit his much-anticipated 3-pointer with 8:20 remaining in the first quarter, and the crowd exploded. Simmons had missed the first 17 treys of his career before connecting from the corner. It was his lone long-distance attempt of the night and his first 3-point try of the season. Marcus Morris scored 22 points and grabbed 13 rebounds while Julius Randle and Frank Ntilikina scored 17 points each for the Knicks. The Sixers improved to 5-0 at home and have won nine straight overall against the Knicks. — Reuters



LOS ANGELES: Paul George #13 of the LA Clippers handles the ball against the Boston Celtics at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Top-ranked Ko eyes \$1.5mn at LPGA finale

MIAMI: World number one Ko Jin-young is hoping a nagging ankle injury will not prevent her from finishing her historic season on a high note at the LPGA Tour Championship in Naples, Florida, this week.

"Still worried a little bit," admitted the South Korean star, who pulled out of the third round of the Taiwan Swinging Skirts tournament three weeks ago after hurting her left ankle late in the first round.

Since then, Ko said she has focused on recovery, and she will be hoping for a fitting end to a season in which her four wins include two major titles at the ANA Inspiration and the Evian Championship.

She has already clinched Player of the Year honors, and her 12 top-10 finishes are the most for the season.

The 24-year-old can also lock up the Vare Trophy for low scoring average at this week's tournament at Tiburon Golf Club, where a \$1.5 million winner's prize — the richest ever in women's golf — is on offer.

Ko, whose season included a remarkable stretch of 114 holes without a bogey — a streak that bettered Tiger Woods' record of 110 — has sharpened her short game this season and shaved almost one stroke off her scoring average.

American Lexi Thompson, who will be defending the title she won last year, said Ko — long known as a solid ball-striker — now has virtually no weaknesses. "Just consistent off the tee, very straight," Thompson said. "And her short game is unbelievable.

"Not like she really needs to chip much," Thompson added. "But she's just overall such a solid player. It's very impressive to watch."

Ko will play the first two rounds alongside seventh-ranked Brooke Henderson of Canada and fifth-ranked Minjee Lee of Australia.

World number six Lee Jeong-eun, winner of the US Women's Open and this season's Rookie of the Year, will play with fellow South Korean Park Sung-hyun and third-ranked American Nelly Korda.

Korda, runner-up to Thompson in last year's Tour Championship, is coming off a successful title defense in Taiwan and relishing a return to Florida. "I grew up in Florida so Bermuda grass, I like it," she said. "Having my whole family out here, too, is really nice and just feels really homey." — AFP



LOS ANGELES: File photo taken on April 19, 2018, Ko Jin-young of South Korea hits a tee shot on the 14th hole during round one of the Hugel-JTBC Championship at the Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles, California. World number one Ko is hoping a nagging ankle injury will not prevent her from finishing her historic season on a high note at the LPGA Tour Championship in Naples, Florida, this week. — AFP

Sports

Pressure on Manchester City as Lampard returns to Etihad

MANCHESTER: It has been a long two weeks for Pep Guardiola, left to stew on Manchester City's defeat to leaders Liverpool, while his players were away on international duty. The 3-1 loss at Anfield left City in fourth place, trailing Jurgen Klopp's side by nine points with little room for further error.

The increased pressure can be felt heading into tomorrow's return to action when in-form Chelsea visit the Etihad, buzzing with youthful confidence after a run of six straight victories in the league. Chelsea manager Frank Lampard, who ended his Premier League career with a season at City, has won plaudits for the way he has got the best out of home-grown players. Striker Tammy Abraham and midfielder Mason Mount spent last season on loan in the second-tier Championship but have become England internationals after Lampard gave them the chance to shine in the top flight.

Yet Chelsea's run of form needs to be put in context - all six of their consecutive wins were against sides they were expected to beat and they have lost on the two occasions they have faced big-name opposition this season — at Manchester United on the opening day and at home to Liverpool in September.

This game, therefore, will be an indicator of just how far Lampard has gone in creating a top-four side. For City, however, it is an encounter in which they simply cannot afford to slip-up. Failure to beat Chelsea could leave Liverpool with a double-figures advantage over the champions and it would take a major slump in form for Klopp's men to let that sort of lead slip.

Chelsea need no reminders that when the pressure is on, City have a habit of responding in devastating fashion. In the corresponding fixture last season, City's Argentine striker Sergio Aguero grabbed a hat-trick as the Londoners, then under Italian Maurizio Sarri, were hammered 6-0 after conceding four goals in the opening 25 minutes.

Saturday's game at the Etihad is the standout fixture of the weekend but the match between West Ham United and Tottenham Hotspur at the London Stadium earlier in the day is also generating plenty of interest given the managerial change at Spurs.

Less than a year after his dismissal from Manchester United, Jose Mourinho is back, replacing the sacked Mauricio Pochettino at Spurs, looking to improve a team that is languishing in 14th place.

Liverpool are up against their former manager Roy Hodgson when they take on Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park while the pressure is on Arsenal's Spanish boss Unai Emery, who



Pep Guardiola

badly needs a win at home to 19th-placed Southampton. The pick of the promoted teams, Sheffield United, who are riding high in fifth place, face Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United on Sunday. — Reuters

captain to win a Stanley Cup, leading the Canadiens to the 1992-93 title.

Despite Montreal outshooting Ottawa 12-3, neither team scored in a first period that was highlighted by Montreal rookie defenseman Cale Fleury checking Vladislav Namestnikov hard into the half boards while pursuing a loose puck.

Namestnikov was helped to the dressing room by the training staff and did not return. Suzuki scored on a power play that carried over into the second period to give Montreal a 1-0 lead 44 seconds into the middle frame.

Jeff Petry's long shot bounced off Anderson and created a scrum near the netminder. While falling to the ice, Phillip Danault slipped the puck back to Suzuki, who popped home his sixth goal. Ottawa strung together good zone play midway through the period, and Pageau tipped in a shot by Tyler Ennis to tie it 1-1 at 9:55.

Ennis had a great chance on a breakaway in the final minute of the second period, but Price made a blocker save to keep it 1-1 and set up a tight third period. Earlier in the day, the NHL and the NHL Players' Association announced that Senators winger Bobby Ryan has left the team indefinitely and will enter the NHL/NHLPA player assistance program.

Ryan, 32, did not play for Ottawa on Tuesday night in Detroit. The New Jersey native left practice early on Monday. He had one goal and three assists in 16 games this season. — Reuters

Bale blasted as being disrespectful in flag celebration

MADRID: Winger Gareth Bale has been heavily criticised by the Spanish media for celebrating Wales' Euro 2020 qualification by holding up a flag that appeared to indicate his passion to play for Real Madrid is way down the pecking order.

Bale's decision to pose with a giant flag that read "Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that order" following Wales' 2-0 victory over Hungary on Tuesday that sealed them a place in next year's European championship has been lambasted in Spain.

Sports daily Marca's front page headline on Thursday declared "Disrespectful. Misguided. Ungrateful. In that order," while AS newspaper captioned a picture of the winger playing golf with the message "Bale gets in a hole".

AS went on to say Bale's behaviour has "annoyed the club" and that "he is becoming a problem," before imploring new Tottenham Hotspur boss Jose Mourinho to take him back to his former club.

The paper's Real Madrid editor Tomas Roncero suggested his flag for Bale would read "out, out, out".

Many more are calling for the 30-year-old, who has fallen out of favour with Real manager Zinedine Zidane and has not featured in a club match since Oct. 5 due to injury, to be permanently axed from the team.

While football talk show presenter Josep Pedrerol implored Real president Florentino Perez to "kick Bale out", some fans believe the flag stunt was a ploy for Bale to force his way out of the club. He was set to leave Real for China earlier this year but the transfer fell through at the 11th hour following a change of heart from Perez, who has been Bale's biggest ally during his time in Spain. He was also accused of "treating Real Madrid badly," even though he has helped the team to win four Champions League titles in six seasons with the club, scoring in two of the finals. — Reuters

Senators slip past Canadiens in OT

MONTREAL: Brady Tkachuk scored 38 seconds into overtime to lift the visiting Ottawa Senators to a 2-1 win over the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday night. Tkachuk collected a pass in full stride in the neutral zone from Chris Tierney, and the speedy winger outraced Tomas Tatar to put a backhand, his eighth goal, past Montreal goalie Carey Price for the game-winner.

Ottawa's Jean-Gabriel Pageau tallied his 13th goal, giving him an NHL-best 10 in November — one more than Edmonton's Connor McDavid. The 10 goals are the most by an Ottawa player in November since Daniel Alfredsson netted 10 in 2007.

Craig Anderson made 35 saves as Ottawa won for the sixth time in eight games. Nick Suzuki scored for the Canadiens, who were playing the first of five straight at home. Montreal took its third consecutive loss (0-2-1).

Playing on consecutive nights for the first time this season, Price recorded 22 saves. The backstop had 21 saves in a 5-2 loss at Columbus on Tuesday. Montreal honored its legendary center and new Hockey Hall of Famer Guy Carbonneau, 59, before the game. He was the club's last



MONTREAL: Cale Fleury #20 of the Montreal Canadiens skates the puck against Jean-Gabriel Pageau #44 of the Ottawa Senators during the second period at the Bell Centre in Montreal, Canada. — AFP

Sports

Real wary of Odegaard threat for Sociedad

MADRID: Second-placed Real Madrid host Real Sociedad tomorrow hoping their decision to loan Martin Odegaard to their fellow high-flyers will not come back to haunt them. Odegaard joined Real at 16 in 2015, making just one appearance for the first team before embarking on a series of loans, first in the Netherlands and now in the Basque Country, where he is due to stay for another season.

The forward has been in fine form, scoring two and setting up three, as Sociedad have made a brilliant start to coach Imanol Alguacil's first full season at the helm. They sit two points behind Real with 23 from their 13 games.

"It's a special game for me," Odegaard said. "But truth be told, it doesn't matter if it's against Madrid or any other side, all I want to do is play. "I think that we've made a good start to the season. We're up towards the top, which is where we want to be, and I'm happy with how I'm playing too."

"My goal is to make it at Real Madrid. That's why I signed for them, to play there. I'm

in no rush, though. I'm happy here and if I play for Madrid two or five years down the line, it doesn't matter."

Real will be without James Rodriguez for the game, but could welcome back Gareth Bale who has not played for the club since October, but was involved in both games as Wales qualified for Euro 2020 this week.

Barcelona, who sit top of the table ahead of Real on goal difference, head to bottom side Leganes earlier tomorrow. The minnows caused a shock last season with a stunning 2-1 victory against the Catalans, and will be hoping to take advantage of their opponents' mixed start to the season to spring another surprise.

Unfortunately for them, Lionel Messi continued his outstanding goalscoring form over the international break, netting in both of Argentina's games to make it 11 goals in his last nine appearances for club and country. Third-placed Atletico Madrid visit surprise package Granada on Saturday, while Eibar host Alaves in a Basque derby on Sunday. — Reuters



Martin Odegaard (top)

Moreno admits Spain departure 'bitter-sweet'

MADRID: Robert Moreno admitted his departure as Spain coach leaves him with a "bitter-sweet feeling" but avoided criticising either Luis Enrique or the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) in a statement released on Wednesday.

RFEF president Luis Rubiales announced on Tuesday Luis Enrique would replace Moreno for Euro 2020 and resume the role he left in June to take care of his daughter, who died in August of bone cancer.

But Moreno appeared upset with the way the change was handled as he refused to speak to the media after Spain's victory over Malta on Monday and reportedly left the dressing room in tears.

"If I went into my last few hours or even my last few days, I would only enter into a spiral of reproaches and recriminations. I'm not going to do it. I don't see any point," said Moreno.

"I have a clear conscience. It's impossible to thank everyone, but I want to say that I sincerely respect everyone and their opinions. I've always been a man of my word, that I wouldn't stand in Luis Enrique's way if he decided to return to coach.

"This is what I've done even though I've taken my exit. I wish him all the best because his joys will also be ours." Moreno had overseen Spain finishing top of their qualifying group after an unbeaten campaign that included winning eight games out of 10 and scoring 31 goals. Spain won four and drew two of his six matches officially in charge.

Rubiales rejected accusations of dishonesty on Tuesday and Moreno has said he remains grateful to his former employers. "I want to thank all the members of the Spanish Football Federation for the treatment I received during my time with the national team. I've felt loved and respected," Moreno continued.

"My experience with the national team started and finished in the same way, with a bitter-sweet feeling. It's now about looking forward and facing new challenges as a coach in my passion, which is football." — AFP

Leaders Gladbach hope momentum intact against Union

BERLIN: Borussia Moenchengladbach hope the international break has not slowed their momentum as they prepare to face Union Berlin tomorrow after their surprise run to the top of the Bundesliga. Gladbach are enjoying their best season since they last won the Bundesliga title in 1977 and have won eight of their 11 games so far, two more than any other team.

They are top on 25 points, four ahead of RB Leipzig and champions Bayern Munich, and travel to Berlin tomorrow as the league resumes. Key to the Foals' success so far has been their extremely solid and disciplined backline that has let in just 11 goals, fewer than any other title rival, and a prolific frontline that includes revelation Marcus Thuram. The 22-year-old son of French World Cup winner Lilian Thuram

Charismatic coaches take centre stage in Copa Libertadores

LIMA: This year's Copa Libertadores final features two of the biggest clubs in South America, but tomorrow's encounter between River Plate and Flamengo is unusual in that attention is focused as much on the coaches as the players.

The coaching contest between River Plate's Marcelo Gallardo and Flamengo's Portuguese boss Jorge Jesus pitches a local lad against a foreign hire, a relative youngster against a veteran, and a quiet club stalwart meeting a voluble outsider.

At River, where he starred as a player, Gallardo has an almost god-like status. In his first season in charge in 2014, the softly-spoken 43-year-old led them to the Copa Sudamericana, South America's equivalent of the Europa League. A year later, he led them to the Libertadores title for the first time in almost two decades.

They won the Libertadores again last year and are aiming to become the first team to win the trophy twice in a row since rivals Boca Juniors in 2001. Gallardo's ability to build and rebuild in a region where good players seldom stay at one club for very long, has long been overlooked outside South America, much to the bemusement of his peers.

"What Gallardo has done is incredible, the level of results and consistency, year after year," Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola said

has so far netted five times and set up another five goals in his first Bundesliga season, with Gladbach boasting the second best goal tally having netted more than two goals per game.

Added to the recipe is new coach Marco Rose's tactical nous that has given Gladbach a winning edge and growing confidence. "I don't think the international break will slow us down," said Gladbach defender Oscar Wendt. "But it is correct to say that before it we were in fine form and no one would have minded playing on."

"But the break was good for us. Those without a break come back with a lot of confidence from the Euro qualifiers. So I am convinced that we will pick up in Berlin where we left off against Werder Bremen two weeks ago." Yet promoted Union are also in good form, having won three of their last four games to climb out of the bottom spots and into 11th place. "We have a lot of points already and the team is playing good football," Wendt added. "The season is still young and a lot can happen. But the team is far from finished with its development and we can improve. The team has massive potential."

Second-placed Leipzig, on 21, entertain strugglers Cologne while Bayern, also on 21, travel to Fortuna Duesseldorf. Dortmund, on 19 and looking to bounce back from their 4-0 demolition by Bayern two weeks ago, host Paderborn on Friday. — Reuters

earlier this year. "It's inexplicable to me that he is not nominated for the best coach in the world."

His opposite number tomorrow may not be ranked among the best in the world, but Jesus has a lofty reputation in his native Portugal having led Benfica and Sporting Lisbon to an array of trophies.

Jesus arrived at Flamengo in June and his side are unbeaten since the first Sunday in August, with performances that are reminiscent of the great 1980s-era side featuring Zico, Junior and Leandro.

Already champions-elect of Brazil's Serie A, if they can win in Lima they should become the first team to complete a league and Libertadores double since Pele's Santos in 1963. Jesus, 65, would also be the first foreign coach to lead a Brazilian side to the Libertadores, the region's premier club competition. — Reuters

MATCHES ON TV	
LOCAL TIMING	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Levante v Real Mallorca beIN SPORTS	23:00
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
BV Borussia Dortmund v SC Paderborn 07 beIN SPORTS	22:30
FRENCH LEAGUE	
Paris Saint-Germain v LOSC Lille beIN SPORTS	22:45



LOS ANGELES: File photo taken on April 19, 2018, Ko Jin-young of South Korea hits a tee shot on the 14th hole during round one of the Hugel-JTBC Championship at the Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles, California. World number one Ko is hoping a nagging ankle injury will not prevent her from finishing her historic season on a high note at the LPGA Tour Championship in Naples, Florida, this week. —AFP

Top-ranked Ko eyes \$1.5mn at LPGA finale

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